

Transport in Henry James

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PhD Thesis

‘I, Alicia Rix, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.’

Signed.....

Abstract

This dissertation explores the relationship between transport and representation in James's later fiction. Each chapter adopts a particular route: by carriage, boat, train, bicycle and automobile, examining its function and resonance within the Jamesian narrative. Texts discussed include *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *The Sacred Fount* (1901), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904), as well as lesser-known tales such as 'The Patagonia' (1888), 'The Papers' (1903), and 'The Velvet Glove' (1903).

The thesis assumes a historical basis, addressing the considerable developments in transportation that occurred between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their appreciable impact upon manners and readerships. James's texts are read alongside the bicycle's association with media and print culture, the literature known as 'railway reading', and the cabby's superior knowledge of geographical and sexual 'relations', as enlisted by the detective story and divorce-court narrative.

At the same time, the project seeks to draw attention to the consonance between transport and the Jamesian, countering longstanding treatments of the author's characters, person and aesthetic as implicitly static. As I argue, transport is not only materially crucial to James's fictions, but informs aspects of style or subject deemed characteristically Jamesian: a preoccupation with belatedness (for the train traveller), an aversion to exposure or publicity (for the cyclist), and the cab journey's association with a local and costly knowledge. Above all, I will argue, transport articulates James's complex preoccupation with relationality, an investment which ranges from the intense subjectivity of his fictional worlds to their series of transatlantic encounters.

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List of Abbreviations

The abbreviations listed below refer to frequently cited works by Henry James. Full details for each entry are given following first references in the text and are also listed in the Bibliography.

<i>A</i>	<i>The Ambassadors</i>
<i>AA</i>	<i>The Awkward Age</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>The American Scene</i>
<i>CL</i>	<i>Complete Letters</i>
<i>CN</i>	<i>Complete Notebooks</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>English Hours</i>
<i>GB</i>	<i>The Golden Bowl</i>
<i>HJEWL</i>	<i>Henry James and Edith Wharton: Letters 1900-1915</i>
<i>HJL</i>	<i>Henry James: Letters</i>
<i>HJLL</i>	<i>Henry James: A Life in Letters</i>
<i>IH</i>	<i>Italian Hours</i>
<i>LCEL</i>	<i>Henry James, Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers</i>
<i>LCFW</i>	<i>Henry James, Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, the Prefaces to the New York Edition</i>
<i>LHJ</i>	<i>The Letters of Henry James</i>
<i>MY</i>	<i>The Middle Years</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Roderick Hudson</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>A Small Boy and Others</i>
<i>SF</i>	<i>The Sacred Fount</i>
<i>WMK</i>	<i>What Maisie Knew</i>
<i>WOD</i>	<i>The Wings of the Dove</i>

List of Illustrations

1. 'An Interior in Venice' (1898): *John Singer Sargent*, ed. by Richard Ormond and Elaine Kilmurray (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p.151 (no.55)
2. 'The Liverpool Docks': W.D. Howells, *Seven English Cities* (New York: Harper, 1909), p.11
3. 'Passports': *American Guide to Europe* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1874), p.xi
4. 'The Mauretania': *Titanic Research and Modelling Association* < <http://titanic-model.com/articles/tech/TechFeatureAugust2005.htm>>
5. 'The Great Western', *Journal of Commerce*
http://www.joc.com/sites/default/files/joc_inc/history/p6.html
6. '...': To Thomas Sergeant Perry, 3 September 1860, *CL 1855-72*, I, pp.69-70, p.70.
7. 'From the Mauretania': To Mrs. William James, 6 August 1911, *HJL*, IV, pp.578-79, p.578 'Portland Place', Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, 2 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1909), II (Frontispiece)
8. 'An Old, Old Story': Terry Coleman, *The Liners: A History of the North Atlantic Crossing* (London: Lane, 1976), p.16
9. 'A Mock Trial': Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims' Progress* (Hartford, Conn: Bancroft, 1869), p.43
10. 'Portland Place', Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, 2 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1909), II (Frontispiece)
11. 'Piazza del Popolo': Howells, *Roman Holidays and Others* (New York: Harper, 1908), p.187
12. 'The Cab Radius': The London Hackney Cab Fares and Distances, Giving nearly Thirteen Thousand Distances in Miles and Yards, Accurately Measured, and Calculated under the Superintendence of the Commissioner of Police for the City of London (1853), Guildhall Library, SL48
13. 'Piccadilly': Henry James, 'London', *Century Magazine*, 37 (December 1888), 219-39, p.229
14. 'A Cabby': Henry James, *An International Episode* (New York: Harper, 1902), p.8
15. 'Crossing-Sweeper to Brown, whose greatest pride is his new brougham': *Punch*, 26 April 1899, p.196
16. 'Guide to Bradshaw': *Punch*, 19 August 1865, p.64
17. 'A battered Humber': H. Montgomery Hyde, *Henry James at Home* (London: Methuen, 1969), pp.98-99

18. 'Author, Author': David Lodge, *Author, Author: A Novel* (London: Secker & Warburg, 2004) [Frontispiece]
19. 'The New Woman': *Punch*, 22 June 1895, p.291
20. 'She': Edith Wharton, novelist Henry James (rear), husband Teddy Wharton, and driver Charles Cook', in *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton*, ed. by Carol J. Singley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.23
21. Richard Norton: < <http://www.ourstory.info/2/a/Norton.html>>

Introduction

The Question of Conveyance

‘[Y]ou are not to worry in the faintest degree about the question of my conveyance tomorrow, meeting me, causing me to be met, or getting me over at all. I can with utter ease procure myself to be transported. I shall *come*—“that is all you know—and all you need to know.”’

—Henry James to A. C. Benson, 6 January 1896

‘this movement really being quite the stuff of one’s thesis’—Preface to *Roderick Hudson* (1907)

This dissertation investigates the relationship between transport and representation in Henry James’s fiction.¹ In its chapters, the social, cultural, and literary associations of different modes of transport are brought to bear on their recruitment by James to enhance key ideas in his texts. I hope thereby to draw attention to a significant and unremarked context for James’s readers. More particularly, my effort has been to show how transport reinforces and inheres in aspects of the author’s representational process: as a style, narrative climate, or formal device.

The first section of the Introduction provides a theoretical overview and justification of the project: its subject, terms, and scope. It suggests the resonance of transport as an area of inquiry in James, and comprises reasons for my emphasis upon the late phase, and for the organization of the thesis according to specific modes of transport. Critical responses to travel in James have tended to privilege the physical and cultural ends of the journey over the act of travelling itself, while transport is often homogenised as a ‘new’ technology, inextricable from ‘modernity’. This tendency has informed my methodological emphasis upon different types of vehicle; an approach determined also by the distinct meanings attached to modes of conveyance in the period, and by James’s own inveterate attention to ways and means.

¹ I take Jamesian ‘representation’ in the full range of senses suggested by Julie Rivkin—‘from the compositional and even linguistic to the social, cultural, and political’—drawing upon her observation that James’s ‘high degree of technical self-awareness becomes [itself] [...] a kind of cultural resource’ (Rivkin, *False Positions: The Representational Logics of Henry James’s Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.2).

The second section of the Introduction addresses my choice of ‘transport’ as a term—distinct from ‘travel’, ‘transit’, or ‘mobility’. It draws attention to James’s interest in the interpretive and administrative office of carrying and being carried from place to place, and outlines some of the ways in which ‘transport’ activates the communicative as well as physical sense of ‘conveyance’. As I argue, transport not only articulates the space between destinations for James’s characters, but describes other interstitial and relational constructions in his fiction: between person and trafficked thing, between past and present, between the figure of the author and his public, and—always and especially—between America and Europe, a relationship of enduring fascination for James, and one considerably affected by changes in travel.

The Introduction concludes by briefly considering how a discussion of James ‘through’ transport is informed by a tradition of reading the author in terms of stillness, a quality or condition that has variously attached itself to James’s person and his prose. Critics often attribute to James an aesthetics of stasis, whether historically—in terms of a nineteenth-century ‘crisis of action’—or thematically, taking their cue from the pictorial and architectural ideas that pervade his work.² Attending to the role of transport in James’s fiction and method, I will suggest, underscores how stillness and movement are reconcilable in his writing, as states which reciprocally imagine and define each other.

I

‘We live [...] in an “epoch of transition”’, writes James in 1908, adding that this is ‘as I suppose every age lives’.³ In his lifetime, nonetheless, the nature of these transitions underwent unprecedented changes. The time taken to cross the Atlantic shrank from fifteen days to five, railways criss-crossed the globe, and new forms of transport, such as the bicycle

² Stefanie Marcovits, *The Crisis of Action in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006).

³ Preface to *The Awkward Age*, in *Henry James, Literary Criticism: French writers, Other European writers, the Prefaces to the New York Edition*, ed. by Leon Edel (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.1124.

and the automobile, made their appearance with their concomitant impact upon social and economic life.

James's life is marked by these developments. Transported, at the age of six months, by the first steamship to cross the Atlantic (the *Great Western*), he received his first impression before he was two years old, in a carriage in Paris, '[c]onveyed along the Rue St. Honoré while I waggled my small feet'.⁴ As a boy of five or six, the author witnessed the explosive construction of the Hudson River Railroad in New York—the 'fragments of rock hurtled through the air' provided an opportunity for dodging and heroics—and, newly arrived as an independent tourist in London in 1869, travelled and enthusiastically remarked upon the recent Underground Railway—'a marvellous phenomenon'.⁵ During his many years in London, James patronised hansom cabs (those 140 dinner invitations!) and in later life encountered new ways of moving altogether, taking up the bicycle ('very vulgarly & hygienically') during a summer in Torquay in 1895, and discovering the 'deep-cushioned' and 'india-rubber-tired' motorcars of illustrious friends like the Whartons.⁶ James's lecture tour of the United States in 1904 saw him 'hoisted', 'herded', 'driven' and 'floated' by a panoply of vehicles and collaborative transport systems, including the trolley-car in which he 'electrically travel[s]' to the Bowery Theatre, and 'the great moving proscenium' of the Pullman train itself.⁷ He lived long enough to see, if not to travel by, the early aeroplane,

⁴ *A Small Boy and Others* (New York: Scribner's, 1913), p.54.

⁵ HJ appreciates the railroad's construction – a 'riot of explosion and a great shouting and waving of red flags' – on returning from his studies, 'taking [his] way home along Fourth Avenue' with William in 1848 and 1849 (*SB* p.23). The Metropolitan Railway opened on 9 January 1863. HJ went 'to see the beasts at Regents Park' with Leslie Stephen, and to hear Ruskin lecture on Greek myths at University College, reporting that '[t]he trains are the same as above ground [...] but for cheapness. [...] As for speed, owing to the frequent stoppages, I should have gone faster in a Hansom; but I should have paid several shillings. Of course at each end I had a little walk to the station' (to Alice James, 10, 12 March 1869, *The Complete Letters of Henry James 1855-72*, ed. by Pierre A. Walker and Greg W. Zacharias, 2 vols (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), I, pp.233-47, p.234, p.236).

⁶ HJ allegedly accepted this number of invitations in the winter of 1878-79 (Edel, *The Life of Henry James*, 2 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), I, p.536). The author remarks upon his cycling habits to Henrietta Reubell, (25 October 1899, Harvard MS); and refers to the motorcar thus in a letter to Edith Wharton, (4 October 1907, *Henry James and Edith Wharton: Letters 1900-15*, ed. by Lyall H. Powers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), pp.74-76, p.75).

⁷ *The American Scene* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907), p.187, p.194, p.433.

catching ‘for the 1st time’ in 1911, the sight of a ‘wondrous starling and flying bi-plane—Atwood Wright machine. Extraordinary thrilling beauty’.⁸

James pays attention to these experiences and to their sensory and aesthetic contributions: ‘the wondrous process’ of ocean-travel, the ‘wonder-working motorcar’.⁹ In a more basic sense, he relies upon the facilities of travel to establish himself as a writer and critic. Mark Rennella has recently emphasized how improvements in steamship transport following the Civil War – making long-distance travel cheaper, faster, and more reliable – were crucial to the development and flourishing of cosmopolitan art and letters amongst Bostonian intellectuals like James and Howells.¹⁰ As an American author living in Europe in the 1870s, producing travel sketches for *The Nation* and the *New York Tribune*, James embarked upon what Nancy Bentley notes was ‘the standard apprenticeship for the high literary career [...] dispatch[ing] manuscripts from European cities to publishers in Boston [and] New York’.¹¹

Most conspicuously, the experience of travel furnished the author with the international situations that recur in his fiction and continued to absorb him all his life. ‘Henry James without travel is inconceivable’, asserts Roslyn Jolly, pointing out that ‘[m]ovement between countries and the destabilized viewpoint produced by the habit of comparing them are at the heart of his distinctive novelistic vision’. Despite this sense that ‘the importance of travel to James is obvious’ – and perhaps partly because of it – the experience of moving and travelling has gone largely unremarked in James studies.¹² Transport has not been treated as a sustained or separate idea in James’s fiction, nor received the attention in his writing that it has in the work of contemporaries such as Gissing, Wharton or Forster (or James’s notable

⁸ *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. by Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.337. In this last reference, taken from HJ’s pocket-diary (25 June 1911), it is unclear whether the word ‘starling’ is a misprint (from ‘startling’), or whether HJ intends a comparison between the plane and the bird (a ‘wondrous starling’).

⁹ To Mrs William James, 6 August 1911, *Henry James Letters*, ed. by Leon Edel, 4 vols (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974-84), pp.578-79, p.578; *AS* p.48.

¹⁰ Mark Rennella, *The Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.52.

¹¹ Nancy Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas: American Literature and Mass Culture 1870-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p.50.

¹² Roslyn Jolly, ‘Travel and Tourism’, in *Henry James in Context*, ed. by David McWhirter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.343-54, p.343.

precursor Dickens).¹³ Critics who have discussed the significance of the Pullman train as a visual or sociological technology in *The American Scene* (1907), or touched upon James's enjoyment of the motorcar, have rarely brought these discussions into his fiction, while transport is usually grouped with other 'technological innovations' about which James was curious, or, more often, affronted by.¹⁴ Indeed, the readiness with which 'travel' is acknowledged as a central context for James's life and work has arguably deflected notice from its means and process, sidelined by a focus upon the cultural differences of destination (in discussions of the 'International Theme'), and by other place-oriented theories or forms of travel, notably tourism and the picturesque.¹⁵

Place itself has justly generated an enormous amount of critical attention in James's writing: whether as an international destination, city, architectural space, or site of composition.¹⁶ As Carl Maves has pointed out, however, James 'was obviously not a regional novelist [...] as in his life he belonged to, so in his fiction he mainly portrayed a small but prosperous and growing group of international vagrants' for whom 'place had no coercive

¹³ See, e.g., Dave Welsh, *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 2010; Nancy Bentley, 'Wharton, Travel, and Modernity', in *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton*, ed. by Carol J. Singley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 147-80; Andrew Thacker, 'E. M. Forster and the Motor Car', *Literature and History*, 9 (2000), 37-52; Jonathan H. Grossman, *Charles Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ See Sara Blair, *Henry James and the Writing of Race and Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Kendall Johnson, *Henry James and the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Martha Banta cites 'James's introduction to the *terribilità* of the newest modes of human transportation' as uppermost in the 'many technological innovations' confronting his daily life (Banta, 'The Twentieth-Century World (1901-16)', in *Henry James in Context*, pp.47-57, p.49, p.48). In their Introduction to *A Historical Guide to Henry James*, John Carlos Rowe and Eric Haralson cite the automobile among 'new inventions' about which 'James displayed a profound curiosity' (Rowe and Haralson, eds, *A Historical Guide to Henry James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.6).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Patricia McKee, 'Travel in *The Ambassadors*', *Arizona Quarterly*, 62 (2006), 105-27, and James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Buzard is concerned with how HJ engages with the rhetoric of tourism and anti-tourism, classifying such tales as 'Travelling Companions' (1870), 'At Isella' (1871), and 'A Passionate Pilgrim' (1871) as 'travelogue fictions' complete with 'fictional "itinerar[ies]"' (p.253, p.255, p.261). William Stowe similarly relates 'James's enjoyment of travel and of Europe' to 'his highly developed sense of place', finding that James 'loved Europe—loved "abroad"—as a destination and as a set of places' (Stowe, *European Travel in Nineteenth-century American Culture* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.170).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Oliver Cargill, 'The First International Novel', *PMLA*, 73 (1958), 418-25; John Kimmey, *Henry James and London: The City in his Fiction* (New York: Lang, 1991); Ellen Eve Frank, *Literary Architecture: Essays Toward a Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Pamela Schirmeister, *The Consolations of Space: The Place of Romance in Hawthorne, Melville and James* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

force'.¹⁷ To deal with 'transport' (as opposed to 'mobility') is to retain a sensitivity to place, which features in both definitions given by the *OED*: 'The carrying of people, goods, or materials from one place to another', or '[a]n act of passing through or across a place'.¹⁸ Edwin Sill Fussell's observation that 'the multiple places of a James fiction [...] often constitute seriatim a kind of *progrès d'effet*, virtually a narrative of their own', thus adjoins my own purpose: to draw attention to the journeys *between* these destinations, and to transport as an equally coherent and suggestive Jamesian narrative.¹⁹

This emphasis also corresponds to what Anne Wallace has identified as a key 'shift' in the psychology of the nineteenth-century traveller, from 'destination to process'.²⁰ As new means of transport became more readily available, increasing attention was paid to the method of journeying itself. Movement was not a uniform experience, and the choice to travel by one mode of conveyance and not by another had its bearing on the novelist's distribution of meaning. This is reflected in the treatment of vehicles themselves as socially legible — Maisie Farange's calculation of the difference between a 'four-wheeler', a 'hansom', a 'brougham', and 'a private carriage' for instance, or Merton Densher's obligatory pedestrianism ('he humbly—as in Venice it *is* humble—walked away').²¹ Bentley's observation that the 'vehicles of transit' in Wharton's fiction are 'machines that govern manners', is equally true of the responses they elicit from James and his characters, whether noticing the 'democratic vehicles' thronging the docks of New York in 'An International Episode' (1876), or expounding upon 'the *traghetti*, which have their manners and their morals'.²² The practice of 'keeping a saddle horse' is 'princely', whereas to take a diligence is

¹⁷ Carl Maves, *Sensuous Pessimism: Italy in the work of Henry James*, ed. by Ian Watt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p.ix.

¹⁸ I have excluded the broader definitions of 'transit', which might refer to objects or information, and 'mobility', as an indefinite category of motion.

¹⁹ Edwin Sill Fussell, *The French Side of Henry James* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p.63.

²⁰ Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.10.

²¹ *What Maisie Knew* (London: Heinemann, 1898), p.25; *The Wings of the Dove*, 2 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1902), II, p.324.

²² Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas*, p.220; 'An International Episode', *Cornhill Magazine*, 38 (December 1878), 687-713; 39 (January 1879), 61-90, p.687; 'Great Streets of the World: The Grand Canal', *Scribner's Magazine*, 12 (November 1892), 531-50, p.546.

pronounced ‘ignoble’ as well as stingy—a sign that one has ‘counted [one’s] *lire*’.²³

Conventions of travel impact those of writing, making it possible to identify James’s responses to the early twentieth-century motorcar romance, to cycling journalism, or to the literature known as ‘railway reading’. Discovering ‘a gondola in a flat little French river’ in Chenonceaux, James remarks upon his preference for such distinctions: ‘I don’t like, as the French say, to *mêler les genres*’.²⁴ Focussing upon the mode, rather than the fact of transport allows for how different vehicles become descriptive terms in themselves. In *The Bostonians* (1886), the adherents of the women’s movement evince their democratic sympathies by arranging themselves ‘in the similitude of an enormous streetcar’.²⁵ The horse-car appears periodically in Jamesian figures for courtesy, while the early ‘flying-machine’ betokens a kind of incredulity; the heights scaled by the imagination or by lying.²⁶

Travel describes behaviour at the level of diction, as James’s characters extend upon proverbial figures that make movement morally suggestive: ‘going too far’, ‘letting oneself go’, proceeding ‘on lines’, or being ‘in the same boat’. Such unobtrusive metaphors represent what Robert Gale and Alexander Holder-Barell, in their respective surveys of figurative language in James, refer to as ‘dead’ images or metaphors, but which David Lodge more accurately identifies as ‘the language of heightened cliché’, a phrase ‘developed out of [a] colloquialism’, which James subsequently ‘invests [...] with [a] startling concreteness of elaboration’.²⁷ Lodge describes the ‘effect’ of this as being ‘rather like that of the heroic

²³ To Mrs HJ Sr., 24 March 1873, *CL 1872-76*, I, pp.240-47, p.242; ‘At Isella’, *The Galaxy*, 12 (August 1871), 241-55, p.255. In a letter to Grace Norton, 20 January 1870, James relates taking a carriage to Nice ‘at a marvellously reduced rate & thus voyaging at my leisure & pleasure *en prince* instead of in the ignoble *diligence*’ (*CL 1855-72*, I, pp.265-69, p.266).

²⁴ *A Little Tour in France* (Boston: Osgood, 1885), p.54.

²⁵ *The Bostonians* (London: Macmillan, 1886), p.31.

²⁶ In ‘Fordham Castle’ (1904), travelling under an assumed name, Abel Taker ‘began to ask himself why he shouldn’t just lie outright, boldly and inventively [...] There was an excitement, the excitement of personal risk, about it—much the same as would belong for an ordinary man to the first trial of a flying-machine’ (Fordham Castle, *Harper’s New Monthly*, 110 (December 1904), 147-58, p.149). In ‘Mora Montravers’ (1909), Sidney Traffle’s intuition – ‘the quick flash-light of his imagination’ affects his wife as ‘the drop of a flying-machine into her castle court’ (‘Mora Montravers’, *The English Review*, 3 (August-September 1909), 27-52, 214-38, p.226).

²⁷ Robert L. Gale, *The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James* (Durham, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1954): ‘Dead metaphors, established in the language as idiomatic expressions or turns of speech or clichés, clutter James’s fiction. I do not examine in this study his repetition of mere lifeless tropes’ (p.7); Alexander Holder-Barell, *The Development of*

simile in epic poetry, where the “tenor” recedes from sight, and the “vehicle” takes on an independent poetic life’.²⁸ James’s vehicles often have their own motility, as in *Daisy Miller* (1878):

[M]eanwhile, between Mrs Costello and her friends, there was a great deal said about poor little Miss Miller’s going really ‘too far’. Winterbourne was not pleased with what he heard; but when, coming out upon the great steps of the church, he saw Daisy, who had emerged before him, get into an open cab with her accomplice and roll away through the cynical streets of Rome, he could not deny to himself that she was going very far indeed.²⁹

A study of Jamesian conveyances must reckon with the supple and almost instinctive metaphoricity of James’s writing, as well as with a confluence between transport and metaphor; itself a ‘carrying’. ‘Transport’, more so than ‘travel’, activates this sense of conveyance. James is generally fascinated by ‘vessels’ (of consciousness as well as timber), and by how people ‘carry’ themselves.³⁰ The ecstatic sense of ‘transport’—to be carried *outside or beside* oneself—is not examined here, though James was certainly sensitive to it.³¹ And then there is his frequent treatment of literary form itself as a kind of vehicle: ‘a scheme of fiction [...] is in fact a capacious vessel. It can carry anything’.³²

Imagery and its Functional Significance in Henry James’s Novels, ed. by H. Lüdeke, The Cooper Monographs: English and American Literature, 3 (Bern: Verlag, 1959): ‘[These] have become part of our everyday language and have almost completely lost their metaphorical character. The functional significance of such images is almost nil’ (p.9).

²⁸ ‘David Lodge, ‘Strether by the River’, in *Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp.189-213, p.207.

²⁹ ‘Daisy Miller: A Study’, *Cornhill Magazine*, 37 (June 1878), 678-98; 38 (July 1878), 44-67, p.60.

³⁰ For a discussion of James’s interest in, and use of, the imagery of vessels see Anna Kventsel, *Decadence in the Late Novels of Henry James* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.3-6.

³¹ Jane Thrailkill introduces her argument for the primacy of emotions in American literary realism—which ‘downplays the usual critical preoccupation with mimesis, referentiality, and fixity and instead emphasizes mediation, relationality, and above all *motion*’—with the figure of Henry James (Thrailkill, *Affecting Fictions: Mind, Body and Emotion in American Literary Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp.9-10).

³² ‘Émile Zola’ (1903), *LCFW* pp.871-99, p.873.

To wholly exclude such dimensions (figurative, affective) seems inhospitable to the kinds of tensions and interests that James's writing invites; nor is it, anyway, strictly possible. That is, to consider the relationship between transport and representation necessarily involves asking how transport becomes verbally complex and allusive, generating its own sustained or recurrent conceits. The disorientating 'lifts' (social as well as physical) surrounding the motorcar drive in 'The Velvet Glove' (1909), like the steady stream of boating images that anticipate the famous river scene in *The Ambassadors* (1903), refer and belong to actual journeys as much as to the realm of the figurative; realms in any case not watertight in James's writing. My discussion of cycling in 'The Papers' (1903) (Chapter 4), argues that the bicycle's singularly contentious attachment to the physical 'figure' draws attention to the act of figuring, in a tale that persistently tropes writing itself as a kind of 'sport'.

It is in an effort to deal practically with such convergences, however, that my chapters take their cue from the literal journeys James's characters undertake, as opposed to their (innumerable) figurative ones. This is also by way of more concentratedly addressing James's vehicles *as* vehicles, within their material and sociable contexts. In his essay 'The Pursuit of Metaphor', Christopher Ricks draws attention to an imbalance in I. A. Richard's famous categories – 'the tenor' and 'the vehicle' (which Lodge, for instance, quoted above, adopts). As a component of metaphor, '[a]ll a vehicle does [...] is deliver, not affect or effect. [...] "Tenor" claims too much, since, fully grasped, the tenor of a metaphor is not its "tenor" but the relation of that to its "vehicle"; and "vehicle" is granted too little, has arrived to be dismissed'.³³

In a novel a literal vehicle is, of course, no more a 'real' mode of transport than a figurative one, but what separates Maggie Verver's conceit of 'the family coach' from even the 'very big Newfoundland dog on whose back [James] was put to ride' as a child, is the fact of movement that is experienced and communicated.³⁴ A vehicle is significant *because* it moves, transporting its passenger, whereas a figurative 'vehicle' is qualitatively no different

³³ Christopher Ricks, 'The Pursuit of Metaphor', in *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.241-61, p.254.

³⁴ *The Golden Bowl* (London: Methuen, 1905), p.303; *SB* p.29.

from any other (container of meaning). The inescapably social and visible dimension to motion is noted by William Stowe, who points out that

travel is if anything more convention-bound than either reading or writing, because it is a public and a physical act, governed by material possibilities and standards of outward behaviour. It is possible to travel alone, or even to travel incognito, but it is not possible to move one's body through space with the freedom and impunity one enjoys as a reader or a writer in the privacy of the boudoir or the study, confined only by the bounds of the individual imagination.³⁵

The distinction is relevant to my effort to determine how James's vehicles are relational as well as representational, suggesting ways in which the literal context of transport might extend, as well as limit, the possibilities of metaphor. Chapter 2 examines how the formal and communicative significance of cabs and carriages in *The Golden Bowl*, often linked to vehicular metaphors within James's Prefaces, is enhanced through an attention to their different uses and associations within the period.

Any investigation of James's writing is necessarily partial. I have chosen texts which engage with individual modes of transport in sustained ways, and also in ways which—as I hope to show—articulate James's particular representational interests or concerns. While these are present throughout James's work, they are more manifestly at stake in his later fiction, which is accordingly my focus here – beginning with 'The Patagonia' (1888) and concluding with 'The Velvet Glove' (1909). James's later fiction also has, inevitably, a more comprehensive grasp of the differences between various modes of travel, which over time acquire a distinctness in relation to each other, enabling James to appraise their particular features more precisely (old ships versus new ships and even 'airships', bicycles versus horses, and 'motor-taxis' versus hansoms and 'growlers'). This not only allows for a more defined sense of James's response to transport, but lends itself to the kinds of relational

³⁵ Stowe, *European Travel*, p.17.

differences which, I will be suggesting, James uses these modes of travel particularly to address.

II

To ‘transport’ oneself or others is a touch more cumbersome than ‘to travel’ or ‘to move’. In the letter to Benson quoted above, referring to the facility with which he ‘can procure [him]self to be transported’, James posits a double bind between the declarative action – ‘I shall *come*’ – and the practical logistics of ‘getting [himself] over’.³⁶ It is this mediated and reflexive quality that I will suggest lends itself to the complex agencies at work in James’s fictions.

‘Transport’ is not itself an especially Jamesian word. It is used pragmatically, with reference to the always practical Mrs Touchett in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), ‘selecting from among [her] furniture the objects she wished to transport’, or to the unwieldy birthday cake in *The Other House* (1896), which the child herself must be carried to see, since it is ‘too big to transport’.³⁷ The word denotes the awkward ‘arrangements’ James must make ‘for the transport of my sister’—‘a very complicated business; she has to be carried on a litter, etc’—to be followed years later by the painful experience of conveying a dying William James back across the Atlantic.³⁸

Such manoeuvres, in which a sense of cargo intrusively and indelicately asserts itself, draw attention to the queasy interaction between characters and objects in James’s fiction; the American spinster who is ‘simply shipped [...] straight back’ for her resemblance to a Holbein painting, or the portable Fleda Vetch, ‘ticketed, labelled, and seated’ in her third-class compartment, having ‘conscientiously accept[ed]’, along with other country-house treasures, ‘the position of a bit of furniture’.³⁹ Ruskin’s analogy for the railway’s appropriation of the traveller—that it transmutes the passenger into a ‘parcel’—undergoes

³⁶ 6 January 1896, *Henry James: Letters to A.C. Benson and Auguste Monod*, ed. by E.F. Benson (London: Mathews & Marrot, 1930), p.28.

³⁷ *The Portrait of a Lady* (London: Macmillan, 1882), p.183; *The Other House* (London: Macmillan, 1896), p.226.

³⁸ To Henrietta Reubell, 5 July 1885, *HJL*, III, pp.92-94, p.93

³⁹ ‘The Beldonald Holbein’, *Harper’s New Monthly*, 103 (October 1901), 807-21, p.820; *The Spoils of Poynton* (London: Heinemann, 1897), p.150, p.263.

defter, more elaborate configurations at the hands of James's characters, who readily employ the facilities of global travel to dispatch people.⁴⁰ The observation made by Lady Grace in *The Outcry* (1911): '[P]eople *have* trafficked; people do; people are trafficking all round', takes stock, as John Carlos Rowe notes, of 'the accelerated movement of peoples and goods across national borders'.⁴¹ Travellers in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, and especially American travellers, Bentley points out, 'were, in a sense, the human objects in a larger field of transatlantic commerce and communication':

In many stories and novels, the transatlantic context seems suddenly to stand exposed as little more than a debased trade route, an economic circuit in which art and aesthetic feeling become no different than brokered goods.⁴²

The commodifying implications of transport are taken up in my third chapter on *The Sacred Fount* (1901), which examines how the railway's primary role in the conveyance of freight supports the novel's precarious sense of property and 'transfer'. In a more general sense, James draws upon the potential for banality and coercion that accompanies the movement and management of people and things. In *Roderick Hudson* (1875), the oppressive weight of transported materials is felt in Christina Light's weary remonstrations with her mother over her sculpted likeness: 'how can you carry a marble bust about the world with you? Is it not enough to drag the poor original?'.⁴³ The description of 'energetic passengers' disembarking at New York in 'Pandora' (1884) – 'engaged in attempts to drag' Customs officials 'toward their luggage or to drag heavy pieces toward them' – likewise elides the distinction between people and objects.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ 'Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely "being sent" to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel' (Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5 vols (Kent: Allen, 1888), III, p.300).

⁴¹ *The Outcry* (New York: Scribner's, 1911), p.44; John Carlos Rowe, 'Henry James and Globalization', *HJR*, 24 (2003), 205-14, p.213.

⁴² Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas*, p.57.

⁴³ *Roderick Hudson*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1883), I p.119.

⁴⁴ 'Pandora', *New York Sun*, 1 June 1884, 1-2; 8 June 1884, 1-2, p.1.

‘Dragging’ is an action tinged with horror and fatigue: Milly Theale is thus ‘offered [...] to [James’s] imagination’ as a ‘victim’ ‘dragged by a greater force than any she herself could exert’.⁴⁵ Yet the sense of being managed, shown, handled, and especially *taken about* has also a kind of caressing social appreciation for James’s characters. ‘She wants to go out again; that’s the only thing in the wide world she wants’, notes Rose Tramore, of her dishonoured mother, in ‘The Chaperon’ (1891), while her aunt’s prediction that her unfortunate relative will ‘drag you down!’ is met by ‘the girl’s own theory [...] that all the dragging there might be would be upward, and moreover administered by herself’. The narrator meanwhile emphasizes the significant and mysterious reversal of agency wrought by Rose’s success at ‘dragging’ her mother back into society: ‘No observer [...] would have been acute enough to fix exactly the moment at which the girl ceased to take out her mother and began to be taken out by her.’⁴⁶

Transport allows for an expansive question of interest (pecuniary, erotic, vicarious), with characters like Lambert Strether being dispatched on errands of business that are also tenders of marriage. James’s interest in these kinds of ambiguities is suggested by his particular use for courier-figures, which include the whiskered ‘Mr. Max’ in ‘The Siege of London’ (1882), the self-professed ‘courier-maid’ of *The Ambassadors*, Maria Gostrey, and the unctuous professional Eugenio—who appears first in *Daisy Miller*, and who has travelled across texts (and ‘crossed from Paris’) to act on behalf of Milly Theale: ‘He had taken his place already for her among those who were to see her through.’⁴⁷ Though a mere ‘mercenary monster’, Eugenio guesses instinctively how Milly wants to be handled: ‘Eugenio had, in an interview of five minutes, understood her, had got hold, like all the world, of the idea not so much of the care with which she must be taken up as of the ease with which she must be let

⁴⁵ Preface to *The Wings of the Dove*, LCFW p.1289.

⁴⁶ ‘The Chaperon’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 68, (November-December 1891), 659-70, 721-35, p.664. The action of ‘dragging’ is implicit in the name ‘Tramore’ itself, whose prefix ‘tra’ suggests *trahere*—to draw or drag.

⁴⁷ ‘The Siege of London’, *Cornhill Magazine*, 47 (January-February 1883), 1-34, 225-56, p.230; *The Ambassadors* (London: Methuen, 1903), p.14; *WOD*, II, p.147. In the whiskered ‘Mr. Max’ there is perhaps an echo of Jean Paul Nadali, the ‘black-whiskered’ Italian courier fondly remembered by HJ in *A Small Boy*, who sits ‘in the rumble’ of the travelling carriage in which, ‘stretched at my ease on a couch formed by a plank laid from seat to seat’, the young HJ recovers from typhus (*SB* p.283).

down' (*WOD*, II, p.146).

Couriers were charged with the practical means and duties of travelling, chief among which was 'the responsibility and trouble of securing conveyances'.⁴⁸ James is also interested in their status as messengers, however, and in his fictions such figures mark journeys as moments charged with communicable intelligence. For Densher, Eugenio represents 'a relation which required a name of its own, an intimacy of consciousness', while for Milly herself, 'their common consciousness had rapidly gathered into an indestructible link' (*WOD*, II, p.280, p.146).⁴⁹ Milly's courier manages other questions for her than those of travel, such as her impressive accommodation—'the ark of her deluge' in which she 'floats on and on' (*WOD*, II, p.157)—but is most conspicuously present at departures and arrivals. Eugenio thus awaits the train of Milly's doctor, Sir Luke Strett, arriving in Venice, and it is 'under his direction' that the gondola 'bestirred itself, with its attaching mixture of alacrity and dignity, on [Densher and Strett] coming out of the station together'. Densher himself, who has been barred by Eugenio from Milly's presence, has thus 'Milly's three emissaries for spectators' to take in 'the anomaly of their having there to separate' at the water-steps, 'he himself of necessity refusing a seat on the deep black cushions beside the guest of the palace'—' "I don't", he said with a sad headshake, "go there now"' (*WOD*, II, p.323).

The question of access to knowledge, as well as to places and persons, is implicated in such exclusions. Accompanying Strett back again to the station for his departure, Densher is once more anticipated by Eugenio, who, 'in the field early, was mounting guard over the compartment he had secured'. Tormented by suspense as to Milly's condition, Densher is unsure as to how to broach the question to the doctor, and meanwhile, as 'Sir Luke's attention was given [...] to the right bestowal of his numerous effects' in his carriage, finds himself mutely directing his inquiry at the courier, aligning the pair as powerful and inscrutable sources of information: 'Eugenio resembled to that extent Sir Luke—to the extent of the extraordinary things with which his facial habit was compatible' (*WOD*, II, p.334). Milly

⁴⁸ Murray, *Handbook for Travellers on the Continent* (London: Murray, 1874), p.xxi.

⁴⁹ Writing to Charles Brookfield to offer him the role of Eugenio in the play of *Daisy Miller*, James notes that 'the part is an important one' (22 November 1882, *HJL*, II, pp.389-91, p.389).

herself makes the link between her doctor and her courier, as skilful and managerial figures alike marked for ‘the final function’ (*WOD*, II, p.147). The description hints at Eugenio’s role in overseeing Milly’s transition from life into death, which James not infrequently compares to travel, and especially transatlantic travel.⁵⁰

Throughout his fiction and travel writing, James displays an interest in such functionaries of travel – railway conductors, customs officials, chauffeurs – as those charged with a sympathetic or uncanny confidence. If couriers could be dispensed with by late century, when improved transport facilities made getting from one place to another a less arduous process, it is the more telling that James continues to employ them (both actually and in an ironic, unofficial capacity) in late texts like *The Ambassadors* and *Wings*.⁵¹

Such figures also oversee formal and temporal transitions in James’s writing. A significant Ambassador appears in *The Sense of the Past* (1917), whose protagonist, Ralph Pendrell, ‘is transported a hundred years back’ in time. In his Notes for the novel, James ‘hovers’ repeatedly over how to manage this ‘miraculous excursion’, faced by the fact that ‘the jump [...] to the far off time, from the present period to the “Past” [...] was going to have to be somehow bridged’. The difficulty, putting almost ‘too formidably the question of a transition in itself’ is managed through Ralph’s visit, by cab, to the American Ambassador, to whom he communicates his secret, and it is on his return—exiting his vehicle at No. 9 Mansfield Square—that Ralph steps into the Past. Like other Jamesian ‘ambassadors’, this diplomat ‘feels a kind of superior responsibility’ and interest with regard to his subject, and ‘stretches a point to see him, as it were, safely home’ (*CN* p.509).

⁵⁰ Returning to America after his first year abroad, HJ announces that ‘it’s a good deal like dying’ (to Grace Norton, 28 April 1870, *CL 1855-72*, II, pp.354-55, p.355). In ‘A Passionate Pilgrim’, the dying Clement Searle bequeaths his ticket back to America to one Mr Rawson: ‘I’m booked for my journey, you for yours. I hope you don’t suffer at sea’ (‘A Passionate Pilgrim’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 27 (March-April 1871), 352-71, 478-500, p.498).

⁵¹ Couriers seem to have become outdated by the early twentieth century: ‘If you need a courier (but you really do not), ask your banker or landlord for the address of one’ (Edmund C. and Thomas L. Stedman, eds, *The Complete Pocket Guide to Europe* (New York: Jenkins, London: Haillièr, Tindall, & Cox, 1904), p.xxiii).

I get I think what I want by making him come down to the street in the cab as from curiosity to test his visitor's extraordinary statement, and then plausibly propose or insist on getting in with him and tracking him, as it were, to his lair [...] It's in the street and at the cab door that he makes the point of 'seeing home', as if then and there merely extemporised; and with the advantage that I thus seem to get what I remember originally groping for, *having* groped for, when I broke this off just here so many years ago. I gave up taking time to excogitate my missing link, my jump or transition from this last appearance of my young man's in the modern world, so to speak, and his coming up again, where we next find him, after the dive, in the 'old'. I think I have quite sufficiently got that transition—I have it perfectly before me. It passes between them; Ralph himself, on their way, in the cab, or probably better still, outside, on the pavement in Mansfield Square and before the house, expresses all I want ... (CN pp.509-10)

James here conflates an authorial 'transition' – his own 'missing link' – with Ralph and the Ambassador's journey, 'on their way, in the cab'. For both the author and his characters, this journey spans a period of lapsed time. The vehicle's practical function is kept in sight: Ralph chooses a 'growler' and 'not a hansom' (whose front entrance made for muddy spatter) because it is raining.⁵² But the type of cab is also significant because it is old-fashioned. The 'conscious quaintness' of a 'rickety growler' operates similarly for Prince Amerigo in *The Golden Bowl*, on seeing his former (and future) lover, Charlotte Stant, pull up in a four-wheeler:

He couldn't have told what particular links and gaps had at the end of a few minutes found themselves renewed and bridged; for he remembered no occasion [...] of her

⁵² Four-wheelers were preferable in the rain because their side entrance provided easier access than a hansom, whose position was 'destructive to gowns' (Athol Maudsley, *Highways and Horses* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), p.206), and Ralph makes the point explicitly, that 'in this eternal rain' the appropriate vehicle is 'not a hansom' but 'a four-wheeler with the glasses up' (*The Sense of the Past* (New York: Scribner's, 1917), p.106).

coming to see him in the rain while a muddy four-wheeler waited [...] The sense of the past revived for him nevertheless as it had not yet done. It made that other time somehow meet the future close, interlocking with it, before his watching eyes, as in a long embrace of arms and lips. (*GB* p.209)

Transport enacts this sense of reciprocity and exchange, for in its description of a relationship between subject and agent, starting point and destination, the journey is implicitly dialogic and communicative. ‘I shall *come*’, announces James to Benson, asserting a destination confidently established, whilst maintaining a humorous mystery as to getting there.⁵³ ‘Comings’ and ‘goings’ have this especial valence in James’s fiction, with its rituals of visitation. ‘What do you mean by “coming” to you?’ Rose Tramore demands, in response to her grandmother’s statement that she will no longer see her should she go to live with her mother.⁵⁴ The question is also put by Kate Croy to Merton Densher, in a very different exchange that yet also takes the form of an ultimatum, or bargain:

‘I’ll tell any lie you want, any your idea requires, if you’ll only come to me.’

‘Come to you?’

‘Come to me.’

‘How? Where?’ (*WOD*, II, p.219)

Whether the damning judgment passed upon Mrs Tramore—‘it was inveterately said of her that she went nowhere’—or the dying Milly Theale’s own admission that she no longer leaves her Venetian palace (‘I go about just here’) comings and goings have, like Densher’s sole demand, ‘admirable, merciless meaning’.⁵⁵ They constitute the crossing of thresholds, whether social, sexual, or even other-worldly. ‘It is a question of the children “coming over to

⁵³ To ‘come’ expresses ‘the hitherward motion of a voluntary agent’, a ‘movement towards or so as to reach the speaker [...] or towards a point where the speaker in thought or imagination places himself’ (*OED*).

⁵⁴ ‘The Chaperon’, p.660.

⁵⁵ ‘The Chaperon’, p.722; *WOD*, II, p.163, p.219.

where they are”’, James observes, of the beckoning ghosts in *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), a question that reverberates throughout the text itself (‘Came how from where?’ demands Mrs Grose, in response to the governess relating Miss Jessel’s arrival ‘on the other side of the lake’. ‘From where they come from!’ she shoots back).⁵⁶

Mrs Grose’s question, anticipating Kate Croy’s, is a reminder that James never loses sight of how these journeys are to be managed, nor of their intentional – and therefore moral – ambiguity. ‘Coming’ and ‘going’ describe inclinations and attitudes as opposed to types of movement, being determined by where one *is* initially.⁵⁷ Noting ‘the metaphor of turnarounds that so marks’ the plot and action of *The Ambassadors*, Michael Seidel points out that, ‘for James, who judged himself “an outsider” in both America and Europe, to move in any direction is to experience something of a homecoming’.⁵⁸ ‘Coming’ and ‘going’ suit, however, the oppositional mindset of Woollett, according to which there is only one right direction, and not the one Chad has taken.⁵⁹ In sketching his outline for *The Ambassadors*, James surrounds the phrases ‘come out’ and ‘go out’—designating Strether’s transatlantic journeys—in quotation marks, suggesting their use as idioms, but also marking them as actions that are to be weighed and appraised:

[M]y vague little fancy is that he ‘comes out,’ as it were (to London, to Paris [...]) to take some step, decide some question with regard to some one [...] It is a case of [...]

⁵⁶ CN p.109; ‘The Turn of the Screw’, in *The Two Magics* (London: Heinemann, 1898), pp.3-169, p.59. Maud Ellmann has noted that the ‘question’ James puts himself, as to the children ‘coming over’ is indicative of ‘the transference world of James’s fictions’ in general, and of *The Ambassadors* in particular (Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.39).

⁵⁷ Thus, in his Preface to ‘The Turn of the Screw’, James remarks upon the instinctive impulse of ‘the fabulist’: ‘He *comes* upon the interesting thing as Columbus came upon the isle of San Salvador, because he had moved in the right direction for it [...]’ (LCFW p.1173).

⁵⁸ Michael Seidel, ‘The Lone Exile: James’s *The Ambassadors* and *The American Scene*’, in *Henry James’s The Ambassadors*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), pp.123-52, p.142, p.125.

⁵⁹ ‘He had travelled, in the dreadful direction, almost like a Pasha save that his palanquins had been by no means curtained and their occupants far from veiled; he had, in short, had company scandalous, notorious company across the bridges, company making with him, in the cynical journey, from stage to stage and from period to period, bolder pushes and taking larger freedoms: traces, echoes, almost legends, all these things, left in the wake of the pair’ (A p.70).

some other young life in regard to which it's a question of his [...] bringing home. Say he 'goes out' [...] to bring home, some young man whom his family are anxious about, who won't *come* home, etc.—and under the operation of the change *se range du côté du jeune homme*, says to him: 'No; STAY:—*don't* come home.' (CN p.142)

Directly involved in both the 'question' and the 'case'—the 'bringing home' of one 'who won't *come* home', transport succinctly describes 'the operation of the change'. Throughout the novel, coming out, bringing home, sending back, getting there – generic yet plaintively insistent phrases – become a constant refrain, culminating in Mrs Newsome's terse summons: 'Come back by the first ship' (A p.242). The phrase 'coming out' occurs fifty-two times in *The Ambassadors*, used to describe both the journeys undertaken by Americans 'coming out' to retrieve Chad, and Strether's own ambivalent issue from his predicament.⁶⁰ Strether's final words: 'Then there we are!' (A p.458) close the novel with a pronouncement typical of James's late characters, wont to use such figures of orientation or arrival to determine their emergence from psychological labyrinths. Thus, Fanny Assingham, relating her role in matchmaking the Prince and Maggie to her husband, asserts both her predicament and her infallible logic:

'So you see', she concluded, 'where that puts me'. She got up, on the words, very much as if they were the blue daylight towards which, through a darksome tunnel, she had been pushing her way, and the elation in her voice [...] might have signified the sharp whistle of the train that shoots at last into the open. (GB p.53)

James himself uses the phrase 'come out' to describe an idea or subject showing itself, making itself available for interpretation. In his 'Project' for *The Ambassadors*, the author aligns the act of reading with that of travel, reflecting that Strether has 'come out' on

⁶⁰ The much-contested question of where Strether will 'come out' is one in which friends like Maria Gostrey and Miss Barrace take great interest.

behalf of Mrs Newsome, for reasons that will ‘presently come out for us’ (CN p.551). Thus, also, in a letter to the Duchess of Sutherland, James advises his friend on how to read the novel: ‘Take [...] the *Ambassadors* very easily and gently: read five pages a day [...] Keep along with it step by step—and then the full charm will come out. I want the charm, you see, to come out for you—so convinced am I that it’s there!’⁶¹

If ‘coming out’ describes the reader’s coaxing extrapolation of a subject (or that subject ‘coming out’ to greet its reader) it also indicates the communicative function of writing. Julie Rivkin has argued that James’s ‘representational logic’ in *The Ambassadors* is itself ‘ambassadorial’: founded upon delegation, deferral, and difference.⁶² According to this logic, the writer’s relation to his reader also emulates that of the emissary: the ‘messenger’, like Strether, ‘at last reaching’ his recipient, having ‘run a mile through the dust’.⁶³ Transport and communication are thus inextricably linked at the end of *The Golden Bowl*, when the solution offered by Adam Verver to his daughter—‘to ship back’ to American city with his wife—is treated as an imparted letter:

There was his idea, the clearness of which for an instant almost dazzled her. It was a blur of light, in the midst of which she saw Charlotte like some object marked, by contrast, in blackness, saw her waver in the field of vision, saw her removed, transported, doomed. [...] [I]t was as if she had held a blank letter to the fire and the writing had *come out* still larger than she hoped. (GB p.480 my emphasis)

The Jamesian character here ‘waver[s]’ toward its textual character, a word on the page, as Charlotte’s figure takes on the resolution of print. It is for Maggie—for whom also, by her ever-indulgent father, Charlotte is to be ‘transported’—that the solution is both written and made legible.

⁶¹ To Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, 23 December 1903, *HJL*, IV, pp.302-03, p.302.

⁶² Rivkin, *The Rhetorical Logic of Henry James*, p.59, p.73.

⁶³ This description, of Strether’s first encounter with Chad in Paris (*A* p.109), evokes the literal definition of ‘courier’—‘a running messenger’ (*OED*).

III

In Sargent's Venetian 'Interior' (1898) (*fig. 1*), Jacques-Émile Blanche observed

serene figures, voluntary exiles far from the skyscrapers, the trams, the automobile horns, the train whistles – far from *progress*. One day, their coffins will be brought to a cemetery in gondolas [...] and this will also be the funeral [...] of a noble kind of leisure. The novels of Henry James communicate this secret to future Yankee makers of aircraft engines.⁶⁴

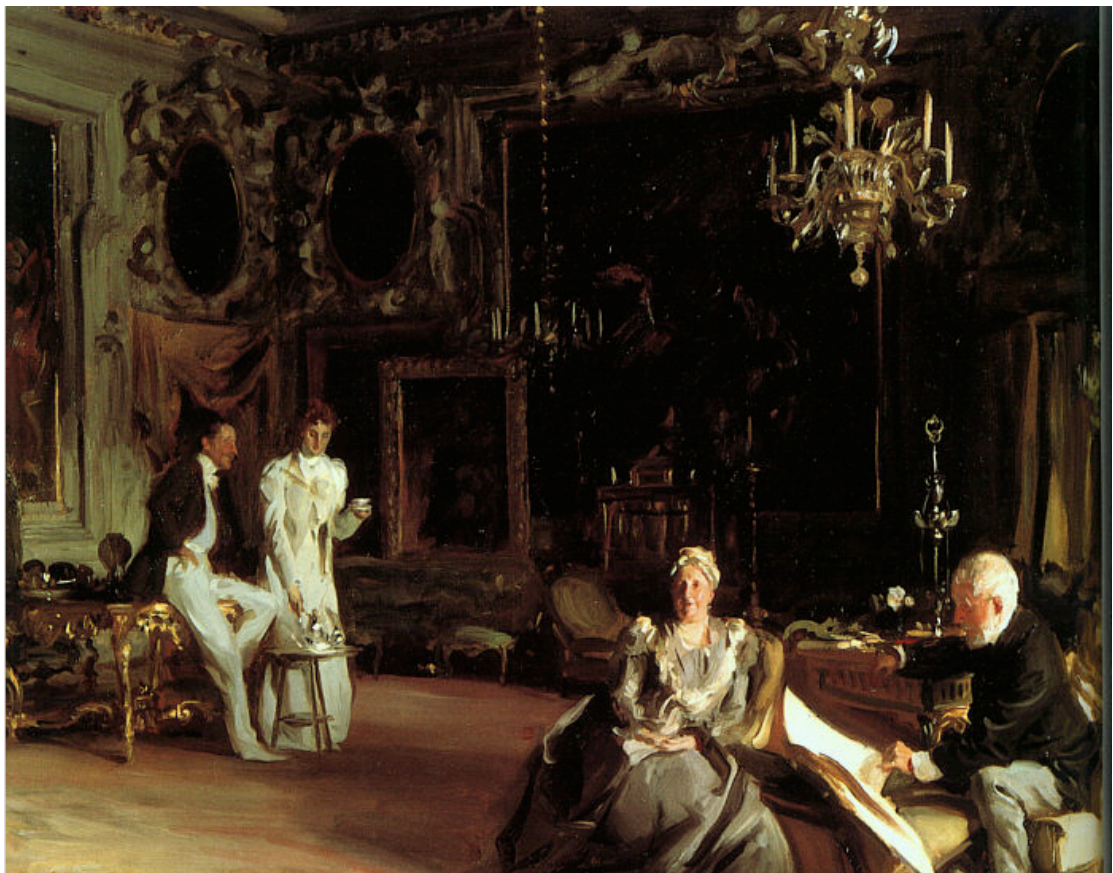


Figure 1: 'An Interior in Venice'

⁶⁴ Jacques-Émile Blanche, *Propos de peintre: de Gauguin à la Revue Nègre* (1928), pp.78-79, qtd. in *Gondola Days: Isabella Stewart Gardner and the Palazzo Barbaro Circle*, ed. by Elizabeth Anne McCauley, Alan Chong, Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, and Richard Lingner (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004), p.xvi. The figures depicted in the foreground represent Daniel Curtis and his wife, Ariana Wormeley; shown behind them is their son Ralph, and his American wife, Lisa De Wolfe Colt.

Blanche's wistful send-off enlists a series of mournful 'interiors' (first coffins, then gondolas, lastly 'the novels of Henry James') to commemorate a 'noble kind of leisure'. In a formulation subsequently to be adopted by James's critics, he associates the author with a wilful and reactionary habit of seclusion. The figures in Sargent's painting do not move by their own volition but are 'brought' – inanimate, and in gondolas – to their final resting place, while modern transport becomes itself synonymous with modernity, and with 'progress'. The sobriquet of 'exile' is made descriptive, here, of stillness and serenity; an ironic equation given that for James and for fellow expatriates such as Daniel and Ariana Curtis (pictured), the frequenting of European haunts like the Palazzo Barbaro was indicative of the tendency and ability – as well as the means – to *travel*.

The considerable critical attention brought to contextualising the author in the last few decades has done much to modify the image of the reclusive Henry James, though stasis endures in readings of his fiction, both as a description of characters and environments, and as a condition of representation itself. For James's early critics, stillness often features disparagingly, as a symptom of inaction or effeminacy. Richard Henke draws attention to this longstanding prejudice, citing E. M. Forster's dismissal of James's characters as 'incapable of fun, of rapid motion, of carnality'.⁶⁵ Even friends like Edith Wharton referred to the author as 'incurably sedentary', and accused him of keeping his characters 'suspend[ed] [...] in the void'.⁶⁶ The idea prevailed well into the twentieth century. Writing in 1954, Robert Gale pronounced 'most of James's characters [...] sedentary and sophisticated', while critics of James's travel writing, such as Alan Holder, defined the author as 'one who preferred to sit in a chair and look'.⁶⁷

The image was propagated by James himself, pleading against the intrusions of high-speed and disruptive friends like the Whartons or the Whites: 'I think I must figure to you a

⁶⁵ Richard Henke, 'The Man of Action: Henry James and the Performance of Gender', *HJR*, 16 (1995), 227-41, p.227.

⁶⁶ Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1934), p.191, p.248.

⁶⁷ Gale, *The Caught Image*, p.5; Alan Holder, *Three Voyagers in Search of Europe: A Study of Henry James, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), p.96.

good deal as a “banked-in” Esquimau [...] or perhaps as a Digger Indian, bursting through his mound, [...] even as a chicken through its shell: by reason of the abject immobility practised by me while you [...] hurl yourselves from one ecstasy of movement [...] to another’.⁶⁸

James’s frequent professions of his own stillness and quietude, however, invariably apprehend or appreciate the movement of others around him. ‘My love of travel grows smaller and smaller—and that has a convenient side’, he writes to William in the summer of 1897, desiring from his post in ‘peaceful’ Suffolk, ‘all this midsummer mixture of heat and motion, of getting out of town to places that one can in security only get back from by at once crossing it and dodging it’. In the same letter he reports that he enjoys, vicariously, ‘the sense of all your variety and activity; especially as to the poetry of motion that you work with such energy into all the rest. It is very peaceful to sit here afar off and admire the whole thing’.⁶⁹

Stillness is linked to movement not only by definition, (of its absence) but perceptually, as an experience heightened by a proximate sense of motion. Sitting at ‘an inn at Havre’, James thus contrasts his own immobility, suspended ‘in a great open cage, hung over the Atlantic’, with that of ‘the swiftly-moving ships [which] pass before [him] like the figures on the field of a magic lantern’. And it is again ‘without moving [his] head on the pillow’, that the author, on waking, ‘enjoy[s] the same clear outlook on the ocean highway’, through which ‘the passing vessels’ continue onwards ‘with their rapid gliding’.⁷⁰

Nancy Bentley has shown how ‘[t]hese contraries—mobility and reflective stillness—inform [Edith] Wharton’s complex stance as an observer of modern manners’.⁷¹ In the case of James, such ‘contraries’ are also to be encountered amongst his readers: a dialogue explored in Chapter 4, which examines how satirical depictions of James as a cyclist trope the author’s supposed interiority and immobility. Stillness and contemplation are themselves not incompatible with the experience of transport, which frequently imposes immobility upon its passengers. The inner life of Maisie Farange achieves an extension arguably greater than any

⁶⁸ To Dr. and Mrs J. William White, 1 January 1908, *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. by Percy Lubbock, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1920), pp.88-90, p.89.

⁶⁹ To William James, 7 August 1897, *HJL*, IV, pp.51-56, p.52, p.55.

⁷⁰ ‘Rouen’, in *Portraits of Places* (Boston: Osgood, 1884), pp.130-39, pp.133-34.

⁷¹ Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas*, p.218.

other of James's central characters, and this as a result of 'rebounding from racquet to racquet like a tennis-ball or shuttle-cock', between parents, stepparents, and governesses, and 'thrust [...] into [...] hansom[s]' or onto ferries, in a series of increasingly drastic motions that sequentially try her moral and intellectual consciousness (*WMK* p.10, p.45). James's characters find time to turn over their thoughts whilst sitting in cabs and trains, whether Christopher Newman's epiphany in an 'immortal historical hack'⁷² or Strether's reverie in a 'much-stopping train', preparing himself for 'reflections to come' (*A* p.411). Maria Gostrey is another such pensive traveller: 'she liked so, in London, of wet nights, after wild pleasures, thinking things over, on the return, in lonely four-wheelers. This was her great time, she intimated, for pulling herself together' (*A* p.51). James himself often received his inspiration in transit; whilst in horse-cars (*The American*) and railway-carriages ('The Pupil') or riding atop buses ('Glasses').

Recent criticism of James's fiction demonstrates how stasis has evolved from a judgment with largely pejorative associations to its recognition as a 'generative' and appreciative state; one from which critics as well as characters derive meaning.⁷³ Tessa Hadley's meditation upon 'the representations of reading *in* James's writing' as a way 'to suggest something [...] about reading James', thus merges the space imaginatively occupied by the Jamesian reader with the 'sensibility and atmospherics' surrounding the confined and 'seated' protagonists in *Jane Eyre* and *The Portrait of a Lady*. Hadley envisages 'the sequestered [...] reading space' as the encompassing environment of James's fiction, which 'has outgrown in the later work its specific location—Isabel's office, Jane's window-seat—and has become the whole novel'.⁷⁴ The significance of the sedentary has recently been reinforced by Victoria Coulson, whose analysis of the seats and sofas that cluster in James's fiction 'make[s] out a complex, nuanced, and highly consistent lexicon of domestic furniture'. Coulson's assertion that '[m]eaning, in James's late texts, is always relational', refers to these

⁷² *The American*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1878), I, p.25.

⁷³ Michael Snediker, 'Stasis & Verve: Henry James and the Fictions of Patience', *HJR*, 27 (2006), 24-41, p.27. Snediker considers patience and inertia in the later novels as both a 'concept' and a 'practice' or 'style', drawing attention to 'James's own sinuous sentences, which seem in no hurry to end' (p.27).

⁷⁴ Tessa Hadley, 'Seated alone with a book...', *HJR*, 26 (2005), 229-36, p.234.

items as coercive—‘sticky’— fixtures positioning James’s characters and particularly his heroines (‘furniture-fanciers’) in their affective attitudes to one another.⁷⁵

Such approaches are implicitly validated by important Jamesian metaphors like the house of fiction or centre of consciousness, with their reliance upon contemplative, stationary artist-figures. These conceits have –with good reason—become almost ingrained in Jamesian criticism; seeming occasionally to direct responses, however, to even those of his texts which, like *The Sense of the Past*, ‘formidably [put] the question of transition’. Isobel Waters’ reading of the novel thus constructs a logic of travel to accommodate, and be accommodated by, James’s ‘celebrated figure of the house of fiction’, taking stillness to be indicative of the subject’s uniquely Jamesian treatment: ‘Time travel requires a means of transport [...] But James chooses a stationary object for his time machine—Number Nine Mansfield Square, the London townhouse bequeathed to Ralph Pendrell’.⁷⁶ Anna Kventsel’s discussion of the author’s fascination with ‘sea-faring vessels’ as a decadent motif for consciousness, similarly identifies this trope as part of a characteristically Jamesian preoccupation with ‘self-enclosure’ and containment: ‘The modern *homo clausus*, the isolated self [...] bears directly on the Jamesian insular, embattled centre of consciousness’.⁷⁷

While the mediated and relational energies of James’s texts have been explored in contexts well beyond the self-referentially textual world of the Prefaces, they are frequently thus re-housed in deference to a notion of Jamesian interiority. Recent and compelling studies situating the author’s response to communication technologies like the telegraph, for instance, ask how these innovations align themselves with the subtle, cerebral interactions between James’s late characters, touching upon themes of psychic ‘transference’ and ‘networking’, in ways that override the prospect of more material traffic.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Victoria Coulson, ‘Sticky Realism: Armchair Hermeneutics in Late James’, *HJR*, 25 (2004), 115-26, p.116, p.115.

⁷⁶ Isobel Waters, “‘Still and Still Moving’: The House as Time Machine in Henry James’s *The Sense of the Past*”, *HJR*, 30 (2009), 180-95, p.182, p.180.

⁷⁷ Kventsel, *Decadence in the Late Novels of Henry James*, p.1.

⁷⁸ See especially Mark Goble, *Beautiful Circuits: Modernism and the Mediated Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), and Ellmann, *Nets of Modernism*.

Nevertheless, the climate of late James is increasingly being identified as one of flux, with critics like Jonathan Levin observing that James's 'sense of the dynamic, relational dimension of people and things' represents a 'poetics of transition' as opposed to stability.⁷⁹ Sceptical of the numerous 'attempts to get at James through a rhetoric of the pictorial', Mark Desiderio likewise draws attention to James's own 'intractable' prose, which 'surges well beyond any convenient resting place'; pointing out moreover that '[f]igures in a narrative cannot remain deployed in a static spatial arrangement, but rather must move, through space, through time; their *related state*—not just to each other, but to the world they inhabit, to the reader, and, perhaps most crucially, to themselves [...] is necessarily dynamic'.⁸⁰ For Thomas Otten, 'the instability of the late Jamesian text equals and is accomplished through an instability of the body [...] persons come to be defined through material processes that won't sit still, figures that turn perpetually'.⁸¹

In ways that scarcely correspond to the 'serene figures' depicted in Sargent's 'interior', the seated figures of James's Prefaces are themselves characterised by a precipitate or latent turbulence. Isabel Archer's famous 'meditative vigil' by the fire— 'a representation simply of her motionlessly *seeing*'— has the effect, for James, of dramatic motion: it 'throws the action further forward than twenty "incidents" might have done' (*LCFW* p.1084). In his Preface to *The Awkward Age*, James likewise isolates the 'propulsive motion' of his story in the transition of a seated figure: the "'sitting downstairs", from a given date, of the merciless maiden previously perched aloft' (*LCFW* p.1121). Resisting stasis, these figures move between locations that are likewise characterised by flux and change. Jonah Siegel, Thomas Otten, and Raymond Williams have noted how the cultural institutions of James's fictions—the museum, gallery, and country house—are beset by speed and motion; the circulation of

⁷⁹ Jonathan Levin, *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, & American Literary Modernism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p.122.

⁸⁰ Mark Desiderio, 'The Art of Friction: Henry James's Evasion of the Pictorial', *HJR*, 23 (2002), 273-82, p.273, p.278.

⁸¹ Thomas Otten, *A Superficial Reading of Henry James: Preoccupations with the Material World* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), p.112.

visitors and objects.⁸² Movement encroaches upon the sites of composition evoked in the Prefaces, surrounded by the ‘click’ and ‘clatter’ of cab-horses and foot-steps (*LCFW* p.1058, p.1071). It is worth remembering that even ‘the house of fiction’ is not occupied by permanent residents, but by characters who appear to James ‘like the group of attendants and entertainers who come down by train when people in the country give a party’ (*LCFW* p.1081).

Stillness, in James’s texts, is not a default, but a positive state, one that necessarily imagines its opposite.⁸³ Readings of stasis in James themselves register this contradiction: there in Waters’ title— ‘Still and Still Moving’—in the ‘restlessness’ of Isabel’s reading habits, as noted by Hadley, or the prospect of ‘impatience’ that, Michael Snediker points out, ‘patience’ must involve.⁸⁴ This same tension haunts the narrative or art object itself, moving the ‘marble men and maidens’ of Keats’ ‘Ode to a Grecian Urn’, whose immortal lines are invoked by James in his letter to Benson: ‘that is all you know, and all you need to know’. James occludes details of his journey in the context of friendly consideration—like the urn, ‘a friend to man’, his ‘conveyance’ is a completed and mysterious act. Yet his profound interest in the mechanics and process of moving, like composing, suggest we should not take him too much at his word.

Chapter 1 examines James’s treatment of the Atlantic crossing in his fiction, showing how his narratives invoke the testimonial anxieties of the nineteenth-century voyage to dramatize a tension between action and accountability. The representational challenges of the

⁸² Siegel notes ‘the surprising presence of speed’ in James’s fictional museums (Jonah Siegel, *Haunted Museum: Longing, Travel & The Art-Romance Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)); Otten draws attention to ‘gallery-going’ as a ‘combination of static works of art and directionless, even random movement of spectators’ (Otten, *A Superficial Reading of Henry James*, p.117). As I shall discuss further in Chapter 4, Williams considers the changes in the late-century country-house party as signalled by James’s novels, as sites of flux and motion (Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.249).

⁸³ In novels like *The Ambassadors* and *The Wings of the Dove*, stillness applies pressure by virtue of its status as *non-travel*. When Kate enjoins Densher to stay on in Venice and propose to Milly after the others leave, she refutes his idea that ‘I might stay, you know, without trying’, by pointing out that ‘to stay *is* to try’. So too, Susan Stringham exacting from Densher a promise that he will stay— ‘You *won’t* go?’—is affirmed as a positive act of stillness: ‘Is to “go”, he asked, “to be still?”’ (*WOD*, II, p.251, p.295).

⁸⁴ Hadley, ‘Seated alone with a book...’, p.231; Snediker, ‘Stasis and Verve’, p.26.

ocean itself are considered alongside readings of ‘The Patagonia’ (1888) – in which a passenger goes missing during a crossing from Boston to Liverpool – and *The Ambassadors*, in which, as I have indicated, ocean travel is closely bound up with questions of representation. This chapter more broadly foregrounds several interests that are ongoing throughout the thesis, such as a tendency amongst James’s critics to privilege destination over the ‘in-between’ spaces of travel (the ocean being the most conspicuous and in some ways significant of these), and the question of how transport is inherently tied, for James, to the appreciation of relation and difference.

Chapters 2 and 3 address James’s use of transport to articulate questions of social and formal relation. Each refers to the author’s observation from his Preface to *Roderick Hudson*: ‘Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the artist has but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall appear to do so’ (*LCFW* p.1041). Cabs and carriages formally describe the ‘vicious circle’ of family relations in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Golden Bowl*, treating the problem of adultery as a matter of specific, costly, and relational knowledge. James further underscores the communicative function of such vehicles by drawing upon their recruitment—by both the novel and the divorce court—to attest to adulterous liaisons.

Chapter 3 explores James’s same theory of ‘relations’ that ‘stop nowhere’ through a reading of train journeys in *The Sacred Fount* (1901) and *The American Scene* (1907). These texts evince a particular concern with ‘stopping-places’, drawing upon the railway’s associations with distribution, supply, and influence, to trope anxieties of uniformity and reliance. James allegorises his own principle of continuity as a social ‘predicament’ – one which the author must at once ‘intensely consult and intensely ignore’ (*LCFW* p.1041) – through the tensions of the railway carriage, characterised by contradictory states of aloofness and interest.

The thesis concludes with two shorter, biographical chapters examining how transport mediates or negotiates the figure of the author himself. In the 1890s, the bicycle’s prominent featuring in debates about female exhibitionism and its own celebrity status associated it with

the role of the press and the public figure. Chapter 4 reads James's newspaper tale 'The Papers' as an appraisal of the relationship between cycling and exposure, demonstrating James's ambiguous reaction to the bicycle as a machine which, like the typewriter, threatened to make visible both the writer's body and his process. It also glances at how later writers have employed the bicycle to draw attention to the much-contested figure of Henry James himself.

In dialogue with this idea of publicity, my final chapter on motoring in 'The Velvet Glove' draws upon James's private writing and correspondence, in which the motorcar features as focus for shared jokes and innuendo. The uncanny identity of the automobile in Edwardian England – a foreign novelty, but also offering a nostalgic return to destinations cut off by the railway, lends itself, in James's writing, to the themes of revision and romance.

‘An Emphatic Zero’: Counting the Voyage in *The Ambassadors* (1903) and ‘The Patagonia’ (1888)

Between the ages of six months and sixty-eight, Henry James crossed the Atlantic ocean nineteen times.¹ The first of these voyages, on the *Great Western* in 1843, took fifteen days; the last, on the *Mauretania* in 1911, a mere six. Despite this ‘numerous record’ for ocean travel, however, James was reluctant to dwell upon time spent at sea.² In his essay ‘Chester’ (1872), the author wryly opined:

If the Atlantic voyage is counted, as it certainly may be, even with the ocean in a fairly good humo[u]r, an emphatic zero in the sum of one’s better experience, the American traveller [...] finds himself transposed, without a sensible gradation, from the edges of the New World to the very heart of the Old.³

Conflating the discomfort of the voyage with its material reality, James omits it altogether, dismissing the Atlantic in a syllogism. Such sleights of hand also operate in his fictions, which adopt the crossing as a recurrent plot device whilst paying seemingly scant attention to the voyage itself. James’s characters are frequently to be encountered thus ‘newly-disembarked’ (*A* p.3), their narrative arrivals coinciding with their literal ones.⁴ They appear endeavouring to ‘recover [their] land-legs’, ‘purifying [themselves] of [their] sea-stains’,

¹ 19 October 1843 (*Great Western*), 12 October 1844 (*Great Britain*), 27 June 1855 (*Atlantic*), 12 June 1858 (*Persia*), 8 October 1859 (*Vanderbilt*), 11 September 1860 (*Adriatic*), 17 February 1869 (*China*), 30 April 1870 (*Scotia*), 11 May 1872 (*Algeria*), 9 September 1874 (*Atlas*), 20 October 1875 (*Bothnia*), 20 October 1881 (*Paris*), 10 May 1882 (*Gallia*), 12 December 1882 (*Werra*), 22 August 1883 (*Servia*), 24 August 1904 (*Kaiser Wilhelm II*), 5 July 1905 (*Ivernia*), 12 August 1910 (*Empress of Britain*), 2 August 1911 (*Mauretania*).

² To Grace Norton, 25 May 1882, *HJL*, III, pp.382-83, p.382.

³ ‘A European Summer. I. Chester’, *The Nation*, 15 (4 July 1872), 7-9, p.7.

⁴ ‘An International Episode’ begins with ‘two young Englishmen’, Percy Beaumont and Lord Lambeth, ‘[d]isembarking upon the wharf’ in New York (p.687). ‘The Great Condition’ opens ‘in the hall of [a] hotel, still bestrewn with the appurtenances of the newly disembarked’ (‘The Great Condition’, *Anglo-Saxon Review*, 1 (June 1899), 7-38, p.7).

relishing the ‘newly-landed voyager’s enjoyment of terrestrial locomotion’, or resting at sea-port cafes still ‘very dizzy from the motion of the vessel’.⁵ As a persistent absence inscribed in so many of James’s narratives, the ocean crossing seems aptly denoted by ‘the emphatic zero’, assuming a kind of precedence among other determinative yet un-witnessed events.

For ‘the American traveller’ of James’s essay, however, the phrase indicates the kind of evaluative tensions that were a feature of the voyage itself: a scrupulously detailed yet still elusive experience. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, magazines like *The Liner* ‘record[ed] events of interest that t[ook] place on board’, while daily newspapers meticulously ‘summed up’ everything from a steamer’s width and tonnage to her concert programmes: ‘Who built the ship, just when, just where, how long she was, to the inch, how wide, how deep, the material, [...] the exact size of her engines, the number of strokes per minute, her speed.’⁶ Accounts of the crossing nevertheless register a discrepancy: acknowledging ocean travel as a secure and regularised practice, while retaining the sense that it was still unquantifiable.⁷ As in James’s narratives, a tension subsists between the voyage’s recognition as a social and cultural rite of passage and its habitual erasure (or discounting) upon arrival.

This chapter examines the ways in which the Atlantic voyage both ‘counts’ and can be accounted for in James’s fiction, and the extent to which a tension between action and accountability might be considered both a maritime and Jamesian phenomenon.

The first half of the chapter discusses this tension in relation to *The Ambassadors*; James’s novel in which the crossing is most emphatically elided. James’s depiction of the ‘American traveller [...] transposed’ to Chester invites comparison with Lambert Strether, with whose

⁵ *Confidence* (1879) (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1880), p.169; ‘Four Meetings’, *Scribner’s Monthly*, 15 (November 1877), 44-56, p.48.

⁶ *The Liner: A Pamphlet Periodical of Ocean Travel and Pleasure Cruises* (London: Hickie, Borman, Grant, 1908), p.4; ‘Launch of the *Scotia*’, *Glasgow Herald*, 26 June 1861, p.4; J. Russell Smith, *The Ocean Carrier: A History and Analysis of the Service and a Discussion of the Rates of Ocean Transportation* (New York: Putnam’s, 1908), p.iii. In *The Wings of the Dove*, Susan Stringham alludes to this convention, finding ‘the grand scale’ of Milly Theale’s ‘nature’ reminiscent of ‘the term always used in the newspapers about the great new steamers, the inordinate number of “feet of water” they drew’ (*WOD*, I, p.126).

⁷ ‘A voyage across the Atlantic is to-day such a common undertaking that most travellers make as brief preparation for it as if they were going by train from New York to Chicago’ (Stedman, (eds), *Complete Pocket-Guide to Europe*, p.x).

arrival at that town the novel begins, and whose story has for James ‘the charm of adventure *transposed*’ (*LCFW* p.1314 original emphasis). As I argue, the complications and insecurities of transatlantic arrival are used to foreground burdens of testimony that accrue throughout the novel, and particularly around the contested prospect of the ocean crossing. Through its association with another central absence, Mrs Newsome, the voyage is construed as both an act of moving and removal; eliciting at once a conscientious regard for representation and its conspicuous failure.

The second half of the chapter explores this contradiction in relation to the material and psychological conditions of the crossing itself. In records of his own voyages, and in his essays on ‘other’ sea-writers (‘rovers of the deep’), James identifies the ocean as a physical environment and narrative subject which separates ‘action’ from ‘observation’. His only extended fictional treatment of ‘the marine existence’, ‘The Patagonia’ (1888), dramatizes this tension between action and accountability, as a vigilantly scrutinised passenger vanishes before arrival, constituting the tale’s only ‘event’.⁸

‘Sensible Gradations’

How aware James was – or his readers should be – of the crossing in his fiction (what difference it makes, whether it ‘counts’) can be considered in terms of this vexed issue of oceanic consciousness in the nineteenth century, in which James himself seemed particularly interested. It is not ‘without [...] gradation’ that the American traveller of James’s essay is removed to Chester, but without ‘*sensible*’ gradation, a qualification that makes a half-joke on turbulence (the ‘humour’ of the ocean). James’s most recent crossing at the time of writing ‘Chester’ had been on the *Algeria*, on a ship that was ‘decidedly a roller’, suggesting that the idea of being seamlessly ‘transposed’ in 1872 is farfetched.⁹ But by his later, smoother crossings James would be perturbed by an absence of felt transitions, and the issue of how the

⁸ ‘The Patagonia’, *English Illustrated Magazine*, 59 (August-September 1888), 707-18, 769-83, p.770.

⁹ To Mary Walsh James, 23 May 1872, *CL* 1855-72, I, pp.4-7, p.5.

ocean affected a writer's 'sensibility' remains a frequent topic, both in accounts of his own voyages, and in his discussions of sea-writers like Conrad and Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud).

The challenge the ocean presents for the author's sensibility has its corollary as a matter of readerly attentiveness. What Margaret Cohen terms 'hydrophasia'—a longstanding evasion of the ocean in literary studies—is marked among James's critics, whose investigation of 'the international theme' has concentrated upon the polarised destinations of Europe and America.¹⁰ Oliver Cargill thus defines the international novel, as typified by James, as one 'in which a character, usually guided in his actions by the mores of one environment, is set down in another'.¹¹ Final destinations are emphasized by Umberto Mariani, who argues that '[i]n *Roderick Hudson* [...] characters reveal their own nature almost exclusively through their reaction to the Italian environment', and by Arun Kumar, who observes that 'Roderick Hudson [...] goes to Italy to find a congenial atmosphere', while 'Daisy Miller [...] meets her death on account of her going to the "fatal place"'.¹² The voyage is similarly elided in discussions of *The Ambassadors*, which, notwithstanding Maud Ellmann's acknowledgment of the way 'the gigantic form of the Atlantic Ocean' imposes itself in the novel – 'an epistemological as well as an aqueous divide' – most often interpret the difference between Woollett and Paris in terrestrial (or abstractly cultural) terms.¹³ In this way, Roxana Pana-Oltrean's investigation of 'the transatlantic space' in the novel ascribes a 'state of inbetweenness' to the destinations of Europe and America, showing how each continent reflects or 'refracts' itself through the other.¹⁴

For the nineteenth-century traveller, however, the appreciation of international differences began with the voyage itself. In 'Chester', the 'gradation[s]' to which the American passenger is subject refer to perceptual changes in one's environment, stages in a

¹⁰ Cohen charges critics with a tendency to ignore the sea in their analyses of literary texts, which are approached instead using 'scales that [come] from territory and terrestrial existence' (Margaret Cohen, 'Literary Studies on the Terraqueous Globe', *PMLA*, 125 (2010), 657-62, p.658).

¹¹ Cargill, 'The First International Novel', p.419.

¹² Umberto Mariani, 'The Italian Experience of Henry James', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 19 (1964), 237-54, p.245; Arun Kumar, *The International Theme in the Novels of Henry James* (Meerut: Anu, 1985), p.101, p.105.

¹³ Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism*, p.50.

¹⁴ Roxana Pana-Oltrean, ' "The Extravagant Curve of the Globe": Refractions of Europe in Henry James's "An International Episode" and *The Ambassadors*', *HJR*, 22 (2001), 180-99, p.196, p.197.

journey of which the ocean crossing was considered to be the first. *The Traveller's Handbook* (1905), presenting itself as a 'manual for transatlantic tourists', has (for instance) no less than five 'sea' stages before 'The Destination' [Section VI]: 'Hints Before Sailing [I]', 'Taking Passage [II]', 'On Board Ship (III-IV)', and 'Sea Life (V)'.¹⁵ A particular attention to shades and states of arrival marks the opening of *The Ambassadors*, where Strether disembarks at Liverpool amidst that port's own complicated 'landing-stages'.

'Gradations' also refer, however, to the operative influence of the voyage upon the passenger himself. By the time the author revised his essay for *English Hours* (1905), James's 'transposed' traveller has become the more secure and vehicular 'transported'; losing his possibilities for translation: 'To change (one thing) *to* or *into* another; to transform, transmute, convert'; or substitution: 'to put each of (two or more things) in the place of the other or others, [...] to alter the order of letters in a word or of words in a sentence' (*OED*). James's use of this word 'transposed' to describe Strether's 'adventure' – and his 'charm' – seems particularly apt, as an indication of how 'he was literally undergoing [...] a change almost from hour to hour' (*LCFW* p.1310). This potential for transformation, I will suggest, registers Strether's association with James's earlier transatlantic voyagers, who, being less catered for by the 'convenience' of mass and rapid transit, present themselves as more susceptible narrative subjects.

In addition to the initiations of arrival, then, the Atlantic itself provided a space for change. Drawing attention to the significance of the crossing for the American traveller in the late nineteenth century, Mark Rennella has pointed out 'another stage of transformation that took place at the beginning and end of the journeys abroad: the act of travelling itself'.¹⁶ Passengers invested in ocean travel as an experience scarcely less momentous than Europe itself, with its promise of restoring health, galvanizing romantic encounters, and acculturating the untried tourist. As Haskell Springer points out, the concept of the voyage as 'almost always altering' remained enshrined by 'archetypal' discovery narratives which inaugurated

¹⁵ Josephine Tozier, (comp.), *The Traveller's Handbook: A Manual for Transatlantic Tourists* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1905), pp.1-77.

¹⁶ Rennella, *The Boston Cosmopolitans*, p.27.

‘the myth of the protagonist returned from trial at sea enlightened with transforming knowledge’.¹⁷ James’s own acclimatisation is imagined in such terms by Mary Walsh James, who describes how her son, arriving on the *Atlas* in September 1874, ‘came in [...] from his voyage [...] very much burnt and browned by the sea’, and ‘look[ing] like a robust young Briton’.¹⁸ In June 1889, crossing the ocean himself on the *Cephalonia*, William James visited his brother in his London lodgings. The elder James brother reported that the younger ‘has covered himself, like some marine crustacean, with all sorts of material growths, rich seaweeds and rigid barnacles [...] in the midst of his strange heavy alien manners and customs’. Nevertheless, he assured his family, ‘the same dear old, good, innocent [...] Harry remains’.¹⁹

William’s comical anxiety regarding the American ‘innocent’ abroad invokes a central idea in James’s fiction—the corrupting and enriching influence of Europe—and lends it a specifically maritime emphasis. In his Preface to *The Reverberator*, James describes the transatlantic heroines of his novels as undergoing ‘what one might call a sea-change’, adding that ‘I might give a considerable list of [...] my fictions [...] in which this curious conversion is noted’ (*LCFW* p.1199). James has in mind the sea-change foretold by Ariel in *The Tempest*, a play to which he was particularly attached.²⁰ In keeping with James’s contradictory valuation of the crossing in ‘Chester’, this ‘conversion’ renders absence into presence, acting upon James’s heroines’ ‘characteristic blankness’ with the result that ‘their negatives were converted and became [...] lively positives and values’ (*LCFW* p.1199). The language of the sea-change inflects these characters’ own commentaries on the transforming experience of Europe, as the recently landed Isabel Archer is observed by her dismayed compatriot, Henrietta Stackpole, to be—as if ‘acted on’ by ‘Prospero’—‘changing every day [...] drifting away—right out to sea’ (*PL* p.103). Likewise, the stirring arrival of another American heiress,

¹⁷ Haskell Springer, ‘Introduction: “The Sea, the Land, the Literature”’, in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. by Haskell Springer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), pp.1-31, p.16.

¹⁸ Qtd. in Edel, *HJ: A Life*, I, p.410.

¹⁹ To Alice James, 29 July 1889, *The Correspondence of William James*, ed. by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley, 12 vols (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 1992-2004), VI, pp.517-20, p.519.

²⁰ ‘Nothing of him that doth fade/But doth suffer a sea-change/Into something rich and strange’ (*The Tempest*, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Nelson, 1998), pp.1071-95, p.1078, I.2. 400-02).

Milly Theale, 'rich and [...] strange' (and draped in pearls) produces an impact comparable with 'the great new steamers' (*WOD*, I, p.118, p.126).²¹

James's excision of the voyage from the 'experience' of the American traveller is made more 'emphatic' by this sustained investment in the language of voyaging, which he so frequently makes synonymous with the language of experience. In his fiction, characters associate the event of the voyage with demonstrative action. Correlatively, narrative action is persistently imagined as adventure at sea. Jane Thrailkill points out that the Preface to *Roderick Hudson*, replete with images of seafaring and shipwreck, 'is [...] cast as a miniature adventure novel, featuring the exploits of an exploring consciousness'.²² In *The Wings of the Dove*, Kate and Densher have difficulty conceiving of Milly's 'adventures' as distinct from her 'wrecks'.²³ And in *The Golden Bowl*—invoking his namesake, the famous navigator—Prince Amerigo contends with Fanny Assingham over whether his impending marriage constitutes an 'adventure' or a 'port' (pp.18-19).²⁴

This almost instinctive resort to the sea as a figurative basis for narrative action has earned James some notice from critics of maritime literature. Tony Tanner's Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Sea Stories*, using the author to illustrate the idea that seafaring and narrative adventuring are 'coeval', introduces James by way of a 'digression', but as an honorary member: 'Of course, he is hardly to be considered as a writer of sea stories, but it is worth noting that he uses sea imagery—sinking, drowning, floundering, shipwreck, lost mooring, faulty navigation, insecure anchorage, etc.—more than any other major novelist.

²¹ Anna Kventsel's chapter on *Wings* discusses how 'imagery from *The Tempest* is wrought into the fabric of Milly's representation' (Kventsel, *Decadence in the Late Novels of Henry James*, p.129).

²² Thrailkill, *Affecting Fictions*, p.20.

²³ Characterising Milly as 'a creature saved from a shipwreck', or 'a person who has been through all it's conceivable she should be exposed to', Densher concludes that '[s]he has *had* her wreck—she has met her adventure'. Kate's response—'Oh, I grant you her wreck! [...] But do let her have still her adventure'—refers to the fact that '[t]here are wrecks that are not adventures', to which he replies: 'Well—if there be also adventures that are not wrecks!' (*WOD*, II, pp.58-59).

²⁴ Judith Woolf's analysis of ship imagery in *The Golden Bowl* draws attention to the 'connection between sexuality and sea in the novel' (Woolf, *Henry James: The Major Novels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.148).

From *this* point of view he is indeed one of the great writers of “sea” stories’.²⁵ Greg Zacharias has likewise judged the sheer volume of James’s sea imagery as an indication of its significance, drawing attention to James’s use of ‘the marine metaphor’ to approach situations of moral complexity.²⁶

James’s figurative use for the sea however, has typically been treated as precluding his interest in the ocean as a material context or environment. Suggesting that ‘modern ocean-travel was prosaic to James because of its very frequency’, Robert Gale cites the author’s preference for ‘romantic sailing images’, arguing that James is not an author whose ‘intimacy with water’ as a passenger has any correspondent basis in his fiction. Notwithstanding the fact that James ‘was an inveterate ocean-traveller’, Gale contends that ‘to James water was something mainly to be looked at for aesthetic pleasure and ships were mainly means of transportation from one place to another’.²⁷ Roger Stein’s survey of American sea-fiction of the nineteenth century – likewise pointing out that, for the author, ‘the sea functions as a rich metaphoric language rather than as spatial setting’ – posits that James, like other late-century writers, associated seafaring with a bygone age of sail, burlesquing a romantic tradition from which, as a realist writer of psychological fiction, he sought to exclude himself.²⁸ A central concern of this chapter will be to show how James engages with the context of modern ocean travel in ways which demonstrate his recognition of the ocean as a particularly modernist narrative subject; one whose representational difficulties and interests were inextricable from its challenges as a physical environment.

²⁵ I am grateful to Melanie Ross, one of the few scholars currently working on HJ and the maritime, for having referred me to this source: Tony Tanner, ‘Introduction’, in *The Oxford Book of Sea Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.xi-xviii, p.xiv.

²⁶ Greg W. Zacharias, ‘The Marine Metaphor, Henry James, and the Moral Center of *The Awkward Age*’, *Philological Quarterly*, 69 (1990), 91-105.

²⁷ Gale, *The Caught Image*, p.22, pp.16-17.

²⁸ Roger B. Stein, ‘Realism and Beyond’, in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, pp.190-208, p.196.

I.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

[Non]-Arrivals

In *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), James records a momentous arrival by sea:

For at last we had come to Europe—we had disembarked at Liverpool, but a couple of days before, from that steamer *Atlantic*, of the Collins line, then active but so soon to be utterly undone, of which I had kept a romantic note ever since a certain evening of a winter or two before. (*SB* pp.277-78)

James relates the occasion; his attendance at the New York Bowery Theatre for ‘a varied theatrical exhibition’, at which ‘the flourishing farce of Betsy Baker’ displayed ‘a picture of some predicament, supposed droll, of its hero Mr. Mouser’. As a ‘troop of laundresses’ chased Mr. Mouser around the stage, the audience paid less attention than they might:

[T]he public nerve had at the moment been tried by the non-arrival of the *Atlantic*, several days overdue, to the pitch at last of extreme anxiety; so that, when after the fall of the curtain on the farce the distracted Mr. Mouser, still breathless, reappeared at the footlights, where I can see him now abate by his plight no jot of the dignity of his announcement, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, I rejoice to be able to tell you that the good ship *Atlantic* is safe!’ the house broke into such plaudits, so huge and prolonged a roar of relief, as I had never heard the like of and which gave me my first measure of a great immediate public emotion—even as the incident itself to-day reminds me of the family-party smallness of the old New York, those happy limits that could make us all care, and care to fond vociferation, for the same thing at once. It was a moment of the golden age—representing too but a snatch of elation, since the wretched *Arctic* had gone down in mortal woe and her other companion, the *Pacific*, leaving England a few months

later and under the interested eyes of our family group, then temporarily settled in London, was never heard of more. (*SB* p.278)

Through its retrospective and disjunctive gaze, James's anecdote produces farcical effects of its own. Describing his arrival at Liverpool as a passenger on the *Atlantic*, the author simultaneously awaits—with 'extreme anxiety'—the arrival of the same ship whilst sitting in a theatre in New York. Each event is balanced by a corresponding non-event: an arrival that is also a 'non-arrival', a 'reappear[ance]' that precedes a disappearance, as one ship is loudly and spectacularly 'kept note' of, and another, though watched by 'interested eyes', is 'never heard of more'.²⁹

James draws upon a well-established site of comparison in using the theatre to frame the spectacle of the steamship, as the 'plight' of the *Atlantic* supplants Mr. Mouser's, and the audience members are linked – via their 'family-party smallness' – with the author's own 'family group' whose 'interested eyes' are trained upon the *Pacific*. The analogy between ships and theatres is particularly apt as James uses it here, to refer to the demise of the Collins Line. Before his ill-fated steamship venture, Edward Collins was known for his 'Dramatic Line' of sailing packets (named after historic actors: Roscius, Sheridan, Siddons, Garrick), and was himself '[a] showman with an intuitive flair for public relations' who 'treated the press to lavish food and drink when celebrating ship launchings and maiden voyages, and thereby received generous coverage of his feats'.³⁰ As a result of poor profits however, and more calamitously and publicly, of the successive losses of the *Arctic* and the *Pacific*—to which James alludes—Collins went out of business in 1857.³¹

²⁹ Stephen Fox reports that the 'mystery' of the *Pacific*'s disappearance 'remained for the next 135 years. In 1991, divers in the Irish Sea [...] found a bow section' of the ship (Fox, *The Ocean Railway: Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Samuel Cunard, and the Revolutionary World of the Great Atlantic Steamships* (London: HarperCollins, 2003), p.136).

³⁰ Fox, *The Ocean Railway*, p.116. The *New York Herald* reported that 'the excitement was carried to all parts of the city. "The *Atlantic* is safe" was announced from the stages of different theatres. The performances were suspended in those places of amusement, by the cheering which ensued' ('The Reception of the News of the *Atlantic*'s safety at New York', *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 23 March 1851, p.8).

³¹ The *Arctic* sank following her collision with a French steamer, 27 September 1854. HJ and his family arrived in Liverpool on the *Atlantic*, 8 July 1855. The *Pacific* disappeared after leaving

James's use for the association is not merely descriptive, but draws upon a fundamental anxiety. Though the age of steam had to an extent regularised ocean travel, so that, like theatre performances, voyages took place at scheduled times and places, arrivals were still apt to defy expectation, and ships to disappear, like the *Pacific*, without a trace. The same architects that refurbished the country houses of James's novels constructed the luxurious interiors of these 'floating palaces', but unlike buildings, ships were provisional spaces, dismantled after a series of voyages like plays discontinued after a run at the theatre.³²

The tension between action and accountability is a feature of transatlantic arrival, whose instability and particular intensity James often communicates via the theatrical idea. Arrivals by sea are dramatic 'acts', typically 'prolonged' by 'intervals' and 'stages'.³³ There is an interest in their reversible quality *as* actions – in the way arrivals imagine departures – and, beyond this, in the potential for a ship to be at one time 'active' and then 'so soon [...] undone'. It is this appreciation of their temporary or precarious nature that seems to make arrivals so much a matter of record. In James's anecdote, the applause that greets the safety of the *Atlantic* (of which he 'had never heard the like') presents a disconcerting symmetry with the soundless exit of the *Pacific* ('never heard of more'). The use of particular acoustic words ('pitch', 'note', 'vociferation') to refer to the audience's escalating anxiety and expression of relief (whose 'prolonged' utterance also links itself with the 'overdue' *Atlantic*), likewise emphasizes the importance of the moment as a communicable event. Such words recur in descriptions of James's own arrivals, involving the act of approach and disembarkation in the auditory recording of first impressions. From the security of having landed, these terms also imply an exploratory ascertaining and measuring – a 'sounding' (another frequent word) in the sense of testing deep water.

Liverpool for New York, 23 January 1856. 'A second Collins Line disaster in sixteen months doomed the enterprise. The deaths, now, of 536 people under its care sent the travelling public streaming back to the slower but safer Cunard ships' (Fox, *The Ocean Railway*, p.137).

³² The architect commissioned to work on the *Mauretania*, Harold Peto, was '[k]nown mainly for building and decorating patrician English country houses. [...] He had never done a ship' (Fox, *The Ocean Railway*, p.409). Terry Coleman remarks upon the prevalence of the theatrical analogy as applied to the 'illusion' experienced by the passenger himself (Coleman, *The Liners: A History of the North Atlantic Crossing* (London: Lane, 1976), pp.15-16).

³³ Thus, in *The American Scene*, HJ's impression of 'Democracy' awaits him at 'the sounding dock, and [...] shakes the planks, the loose boards of its theatric stage' (*AS* p.54).

James's use of the phrase 'non-arrival' registers both the want of terms to refer to not-yet-apparent things and the speculative effects of pairing absence with presence. These are pondered by Conrad, considering '[t]he different divisions of that kind of news', and particularly the implications of 'the heading "Overdue"':

There is something sinister to a seaman in the very grouping of the letters which form this word [...] Only a very few days more [...] three weeks, a month later, perhaps, the name of ships under the blight of the "Overdue" heading shall appear again in the column of "Shipping Intelligence," but under the final declaration of 'Missing'...

There is, Conrad implies, a narrative within a non-arrival; even the missing ships 'shall appear again' (in print), while 'the final declaration' of 'missing' yet contains 'a horrible depth of doubt and speculation'.³⁴ James's anecdote, which opens with the arrival of one transatlantic liner in New York and closes with the departure of another—from England and in the opposite direction—is distractingly strewn with temporal markers, framing the lacuna of an ocean crossing whose various durations are fretfully counted: 'a few months', 'several days', 'a couple of days', 'a jot', 'a snatch', 'a moment'.

The negative imagination surrounding arrivals by sea is generative in ways demonstrated by James's own narratives, which devote spectacular attention to delays and missing presences. In novels like *The Ambassadors*, transatlantic arrival is used to enhance questions of testimony and record, dramatizing the explicatory missions and temperaments of characters themselves.

³⁴ Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea* (New York: Harper, 1906), p.94, pp.96-97.



Figure 2: ‘The Liverpool Docks’

Landing- [Stages]

Lambert Strether’s arrival at the threshold of *The Ambassadors* coincides with his arrival in Europe, and this presents James with a testimonial burden: ‘He arrives (arrives at Chester) as for the dreadful purpose of giving his creator “no end” to tell about him—before which rigorous mission the serenest of creators might well have quailed’ (*LCFW* pp.1315-16).³⁵ In terms similarly absolute, the novel’s ‘conclusion’ marks the moment of Strether’s departure: ‘He must go back as he came. [...] We see him on the eve of departure, with whatever awaits him *là-bas*’ (*CN* p.575). James’s alignment of narrative ending with Strether’s re-embarkation is explicit: his summons ‘is like the bell of the steamer calling him, from its place at the dock, aboard again, and by the same act ringing down the curtain on the play’ (*CN* p.573).

³⁵ The nature of Strether’s arrival, notes HJ in his Preface to the novel, ‘grimly deprived [him] of conventional modes of “telling”’ (*LCFW* p.1316).

Anticipating his description of the arrival of *Atlantic*—‘after the fall of the curtain on the farce’—James thus abruptly excises the ocean crossing and imbues it with dramatic and formal importance. The neatness with which he aligns Strether’s European and narrative arrivals and exits elides a discrepancy, however, evinced by James’s double-take on the word ‘arrives’. Strether’s actual arrival is not in fact ‘at Chester’, but at Liverpool, with his sensations of landing given retrospectively.

Strether’s first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend; yet on his learning that Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening he was not wholly disconcerted. [...] The same secret principle [...] that had prompted Strether not absolutely to desire Waymarsh’s presence at the dock, [...] now operated to make him feel he could still wait without disappointment. [...] The principle [...] had been, with the most newly-disembarked of the two men, wholly instinctive—the fruit of a sharp sense that, delightful as it would be to find himself looking, after so much separation, into his comrade’s face, his business would be a trifle bungled should he simply arrange that this countenance should present itself to the nearing steamer as the first ‘note’, for him, of Europe. (*A* p.3)

Having ‘reached [his] hotel’, Strether’s movements are rewound through consecutive prior stages; he is registered as having ‘disembarked’, located ‘at the dock’, then positioned back upon ‘the nearing steamer’. Wallace Chafe identifies this initial ‘difficulty’ in reading Strether’s arrival: ‘I understood from the early part of the paragraph that Strether had already landed (at Liverpool?) and gone to the hotel (at Chester?). Why then should the author now be writing about what would happen when Strether landed?’ The ‘effect’ of James’s sentence, Chafe notes, ‘is to throw the [reader] into pluperfect time [...] a time when Strether was still aboard the ship’.³⁶

³⁶ Wallace Chafe, ‘Sources of Difficulty’, in *The Idea of Difficulty in Literature*, ed. by Alan C. Purves (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp.7-23, p.20.

This lingering shipboard sense and its consequent temporal lag makes itself felt in James's several accounts of his own arrival at Liverpool in 1869, and also of his disembarkation at Hoboken shore on August 1904, in *The American Scene*. '[O]n emerging from the comparatively assured order of the great berth of the ship' (*AS* p.1), James returns to 'the crossing of the water', receiving his impressions 'as I considered and bumped' (*AS* p.2). These 'vibrations' are acute – comprising 'sights, sounds, smells' (*AS* p.1) – and James emphasizes 'the still finer throb of seeing [New York] in advance' (*AS* p.3). It is having already landed in New York, and subsequently re-embarked for his shorter journey 'on the deck of a shining steamer bound for the Jersey shore', that James rather incongruously catches '[t]he note of manners, the note that begins to sound, everywhere, for the spirit *newly disembarked*', which 'seemed, on the great clean deck, fairly to vociferate in the breeze' (*AS* p.5 my emphasis). The state of being 'newly disembarked' seems a flexible one that remembers being at sea, and factors that memory into subsequent impressions.

In his exhaustive analysis of the novel's opening paragraph, Ian Watt remarks upon another peculiarity of Strether's arrival; his position, relative to Waymarsh's, as 'most newly-disembarked'.³⁷ It might be that, as Watt suggests, it was a 'mere slip' (though James did not correct the phrase in the 1909 edition). Another explanation, Watt submits, turns on the literal difference between 'most' and 'more': 'James, it may be surmised, did not want to compare the recency of the two men's arrival, but to inform us that Strether's arrival was "very" or as we might say, "most" recent; the use of the superlative also had the advantage of suggesting the long and fateful tradition of transatlantic disembarcations in general'.³⁸ Whether or not this is right, what James's emphasis *does* remark is his interest in arrival as a state subject to degrees and variations, whether temporal or experiential. James alludes to the 'tradition of transatlantic disembarcations' in his Preface to 'Lady Barbarina', describing the increasingly frequent arrivals of transatlantic voyagers:

³⁷ Ian Watt, 'The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*: An Explication', in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Ambassadors: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Albert E. Stone (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp.75-87.

³⁸ Watt, 'The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*', p.83.

[I]t is now unmistakeable that to come forth, from whatever privacy, to almost any one of the great European highways, and more particularly perhaps to approach the ports of traffic for the lately-developed and so flourishing 'southern route' from New York and Boston, is to encounter one of those big general questions [...] 'Who are they, what are they, whence and whither and why?' the 'critic of life', international or other, still, or more and more, asks himself ... (*LCFW* pp.1216-17)

It is with such a flurry of questions that James finds himself confronted upon Strether's 'arrival':

Where has he come from and why has he come, what is he doing [...] To answer these questions plausibly, to answer them as under cross-examination in the witness-box by counsel for the prosecution, in other words satisfactorily to account for Strether [...] was to possess myself of the entire fabric. (*LCFW* p.1309)

In each case, James refers the context of transatlantic arrival to the question of narrative accountability. In his Preface to *The Ambassadors*, the question of how 'to account for Strether' prompts James's resort to other conceits involving counting or 'ciphering' (besides the 'witness-box' the author includes 'the chief accountant' and 'the gentlemen who audit ledgers' (*LCFW* p.1309)).³⁹ Strether's 'probable course' has 'to be finely calculated' (*LCFW* p.1310), and Strether himself is equipped with a pressing need to report himself: 'No one could explain better when needful, nor put more conscience into an account or a report' (*A* p.105). This trait seems both enhanced and compromised by the 'business' of landing, as Strether is 'prepared to be vague to Waymarsh about the hour of the ship's touching', even as he guiltily 'reflect[s] that, should he have to describe himself there as having "got in" so

³⁹ George Eliot uses a similar conceit to refer to her obligation in *Adam Bede* (1859): 'as if I were in the witness-box narrating my experience on oath' (Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York: Harper, 1860), p.150).

early, it would be difficult to make the interval look particularly eager' (*A* p.4). Regarding this obligation (to represent 'the interval') Strether's arrival starts a kind of count-down: '[A] week had elapsed since he quitted the ship, and there were more things in his mind than so few days could account for' (*A* p.60).

The administrative duties of arrival are also implicit in Strether's 'catalogu[ing]' of names and faces (*A* p.7). Besides Waymarsh's hypothetical 'countenance', there are the striking 'features' (*A* p.5) of the self-professed 'courier' Maria Gostrey, with whom he exchanges name-cards at the hotel (she suggests they 'look' each-other 'up' (*A* p.9)) and Strether's 'sharp survey' of his own features, whose 'characteristically American cut' and 'immediate signs'—a man of the middle height [...] of five-and-fifty, [...] a marked bloodless brownness of face, a thick dark moustache [...] and a nose of bold free prominence' (*A* p.6)—suggest the physiognomic break-down listed in passports and replicated in guidebooks (*fig.3*).

<i>PASSPORTS.</i>		xi
Yours,	(Name.)	
Age	_____
Stature	_____
Forehead	(high or low)
Eyes	(colour)
Nose	(large or small)
Mouth	(do.)
Chin	(round or long)
Hair	(colour)
Complexion	(florid or sallow)
Face	(oval or long)
These must be filled up as the subject demands.)		

Figure 3: 'Passports'

In the 'Barbarina' Preface, the questions provoked by transatlantic arrivals likewise generate the need for records: 'the interminable passenger-lists that proclaim the prosperity of the great conveying companies', the inscription of 'little names' in 'little books' (*LCFW*

p.1217).⁴⁰ Yet James declares himself baffled both by the sheer number of these travellers ('the diluvian presence') and their boundless assurance of 'convenience' (*LCFW* p.1217): 'One can but speak for one's self, and my imagination, on the great highways, I find, doesn't rise to such people, who are obviously beyond my divination. They strike one, above all, as giving no account of themselves' (*LCFW* p.1218).⁴¹

Transatlantic voyagers nowadays, James suggests, recommend themselves less to the authorial imagination, being too fatally catered for by the facilities of modern travel. The 'great' – and now numerous – 'highways' enable mass traffic, a confusion of type, and there is a corresponding complacency on the part of passengers whose sense of security dulls their imaginative appeal. '[P]oor Lambert Strether, washed up on the sunny strand by the waves of a single day' (*A* p.61), assumes rather the attitude of James's earlier travellers whose 'stranded helplessness', the author finds, in his Preface to *The Reverberator*, 'irresistibly destitute of those elements of preparedness' (*LCFW* p.1199).⁴²

Thus, in 'Pandora' (1884), the American travellers embarking at Southampton appear, under the gaze of the officious diplomat, Count Vogelstein, as 'the uninformed, the unprovided, the belated, the bewildered'. Like Strether, Vogelstein is 'impatient to report himself', though, unlike him, rather lacking in imagination. It is during this delayed process of departure – as 'the gangway was removed and the vessel indulged in the awkward evolutions that were to detach her from land' – that Vogelstein, watching 'the charming English coast [as it] passed before him' and anticipating its variance from the American, reflects: 'Differences [...] were notoriously half the charm of travel, and perhaps even most when they couldn't be expressed in figures, numbers, diagrams'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Passports were not as strictly necessary for passengers travelling from America to England as they were for travellers arriving in America, but still advised.

⁴¹ Howells, attempting 'to give some notion of the fond behavio[u]r of the arriving Americans', declares that 'no art can give the impression of their exceeding multitude' (Howells, *Seven English Cities* (New York: Harper, 1909), p.11).

⁴² Strether is twice described in the novel as 'stranded'. The other occasion is much later in the novel, keeping company with Mamie Pocock: 'he could really for the time have fancied himself stranded with her on a far shore, during an ominous calm, in a quaint community of shipwreck' (*A* p.325).

⁴³ 'Pandora', *New York Sun*, 1 June 1884, pp.1-2, p.1.

Difference is a prominent term in *The Ambassadors*—James’s ‘drama of discrimination’ (*LCFW* p.1311)—and the lingering complications of Strether’s disembarkation remark its importance. The Pococks, on the other hand, come armed with ‘preparedness’, like the affirmative American families James observes in *The American Scene*:⁴⁴

They are the people ‘arrived’, and, what is more, disembarked: that’s all the difference. It seems a difference because elsewhere (in ‘Europe,’ say again), though we see them begin, at the very most, to arrive, socially, we yet practically see them still on the ship—we have never yet seen them disembark thus *en masse*. This is the effect they have when, all impediments and objections on the dock removed, they do *that*. (*AS* p.327)

James’s estimation of ‘the difference’ between arrival and disembarkation—‘“arrived” and, *what is more*, disembarked’—again suggests the deliberate distinctions implicit in Strether’s own landing. Being ‘still on the ship’ is recognized as a stage of arrival, and also as denoting a social attitude, to be contrasted with that of travellers who brook no ‘impediment [or] objection’. In this respect, Strether’s ‘most newly disembarked’ status would suggest his being most new or naïve (‘fresh off the boat’) rather than – as Watt suggests – latest or ‘most recent’.

The ability of returning Americans to disembark ‘*en masse*’ and without ‘impediment’ also gestures at the difference in landing conditions between Liverpool and New York. While travellers making the crossing to America could disembark directly onto the wharves, Liverpool’s own notoriously high and fickle tides protracted the landing experience, which had to be achieved in separate phases. Liners were obliged to wait out in the Mersey while tug-boats dispatched passengers ashore, and with the increasingly

⁴⁴ Michael Seidel makes this connection between the Pococks and the ‘arriviste’ American family (Seidel, ‘The Lone Exile’, p.139).

demanding schedules of steamship companies such delays became more apparent and problematic.⁴⁵ The construction of a floating gangway was intended to expedite the process of arrival, and both landing-stage and docks were extended and deepened at the turn of the century to accommodate the expanding berths of ocean liners.

The Prince's landing-stage was not erected until 1876, too late for James arriving in 1869. But Strether would have had the advantage of this impressive structure, which reached its full extent in 1892. The depiction of Strether's disembarkation – in about 1895 – as prolonged and lingering, however (though by his account, also 'early') contrasts with the immediacy of other 'people on the ship' who 'plunged straight into the current that set, from the landing-stage, to London' (A p.4). Strether's arrival seems more congruous with the complicated landing procedure James describes in his own several, temporally staggered, records of arriving at Liverpool on 27 February 1869.⁴⁶ 'On finally getting in off the ship' after 'a terribly tedious time of it', James writes to his family while 'lunch[ing] off a muffin & a cup of tea in the coffee room of [his] mellow & musty hotel', the Adelphi. As James savours his quintessentially English experience with a certain amount of lip-smacking ('muffin', 'mellow', 'musty'), he reports that 'I enjoy these 1st hours of landing most deeply'.⁴⁷ The moment would be enshrined twenty years later in 'London' (1888), and, as David Seed notes, 'James made a second attempt' (properly speaking a third) 'to recapture the excitement of landing in Liverpool in [...] *The Middle Years*'.⁴⁸

With each re-telling, James prolongs the act of arrival, indulging in Strether-like procrastinations. In 'London', the 'terribly tedious' business of 'getting off' the ship is

⁴⁵ G. Jackson, 'The Ports', in *Transport in Victorian Britain*, ed. by Michael J. Freeman and Derek H. Aldcroft (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp.218-52, p.239.

⁴⁶ Adrian Poole calculates that 'the novel must be set shortly after 1895', given that Strether was twenty-five at his marriage around 1865—'with the [American Civil] war just over'—(A p.64) and fifty-five at the time the novel's action begins (Poole, (ed.), *The Ambassadors* (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), p.485). The railway station at Prince's Landing was constructed in 1895, and James's description of travellers leaving Liverpool in 1869 is thus slightly less organized and straightforward: 'The other passengers had dispersed, knowingly catching trains for London' ('London', p.219).

⁴⁷ To HJ Sr., Mary Walsh James, and Family, 27 February 1869, *CL 1855-72*, I, pp.219-22, p.221.

The narrator of 'An International Episode' remarks that 'The first dinner on land, after a sea voyage, is under any circumstances a delightful occasion' (p.688).

⁴⁸ David Seed, (ed.), *American Travellers in Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p.62.

refigured as positive anticipation; James would remember that ‘we had been long disembarking’ with ‘the sense of approach [...] already almost intolerably strong at Liverpool’. His use of the word ‘already’ indicates that the port does not constitute arrival in the truest sense. Yet in recording the events of ‘that smoky Saturday’—his judgment of ‘Liverpool [...] as a supreme success’—James relates his landed impressions to a perspective acquired aboard ship: ‘It assumed this character at an early hour,—or rather, indeed, twenty-four hours before—with the sight, as one looked across the wintry ocean, of the strange dark, lonely freshness of the coast of Ireland’.⁴⁹ The inconvenience of having to anchor out at sea represents, retrospectively, another source of anticipatory pleasure: ‘Better still, before we could come up to the city, were the black steamers knocking about in the yellow Mersey, under a sky so low that they seemed to touch it with their funnels’.⁵⁰ In *The Middle Years*, James’s prolongs the ‘particular small hour’ of landing indefinitely:

I like fairly to hang about [...] that momentous March day—which I have glanced at too, I believe, on some other and less separated page than this—for the sake of the extraordinary gage of experience that it seemed on the spot to offer, and that I had but to take straight up: my life, on so complacently near a view as I now treat myself to, having veritably consisted but in the prolongation of that act. I took up the gage, and as I look back the fullest as well as simplest account of the interval till now strikes me as being that I have never, in common honour, let it drop again. And the small hour was just that of my having landed at Liverpool in the gusty, cloudy, overwhelmingly English morning ... (MY p.4)

⁴⁹ ‘London’, p.219. Guidebooks alerted voyagers to the southwesterly peninsula of Ireland and its lighthouse for their first glimpse of Europe: ‘Liverpool: First land, dist., n., Mizen Head; FASTNET LIGHT; Cape Clear on isl. at the s. pt. of Ireland’ (Lafayette C. Loomis, *The Index Guide to Travel and Art-Study in Europe: A Compendium of Geographical, Historical, and Artistic Information for the Use of Americans* (New York: Scribner’s, 1890), p.xix).

⁵⁰ ‘London’, p.219.

James's record of his landing is marked by attempts at quantification and precision; his examination of what the moment 'veritably consisted', his determination to give 'the fullest as well as [the] simplest account'. A completed state of 'particular' duration and location (that of 'having landed', at a 'small hour', and 'on the spot') is subjected to dilatory separations and intervals, while James's effort to both bridge and establish the distance between past and present involves a measuring of temporal as spatial distances: 'interval[s]' 'less separated'; 'view[s]' 'complacently near', suggesting the relational aspect of the ship itself approaching land. The incongruence of the author's retrospective glance—'I look back'—with the traveller's forward-moving 'sense of approach', recalls the temporal and directional ambiguity of Strether's landing in *The Ambassadors*.

This estimating sense is enhanced by James's use of the word 'gage' (gauntlet, pledge, voucher), brought into a quasi-punning relationship with its homophone 'gage/gauge' (apparatus for measurement). The 'gage of experience' is a phrase James uses more than once in his autobiography, and he does not necessarily or specifically infer its nautical resonances here, though tidal variations ('high water marks') are a favourite figurative resource in his estimation of other quantities – imagination, confidence, discrimination. James uses the word in its measuring sense of the unfathomable names of arrivals set down in 'passenger lists': 'Queer enough [...] were these gages of identity' (*LCFW* p.1217).⁵¹ And again twice in his Preface to *The Ambassadors*, of the novelist's 'gage of the probable success' wrought by his conception of Mrs Newsome, and of his interest in 'this business of looking for the unseen and the occult, in a scheme half-grasped, [...] so to speak, by the clinging scent, of the gage already in hand' (*LCFW* p.1315, p.1307). James's account of his arrival in *The Middle Years* is also that of his first grasp of the international theme (which he must never again 'let [...] drop'), so that these measurements can be read as efforts to 'gage' a sense of international difference.

⁵¹ 'GAGE, in the sea language', refers to 'the position of one vessel with reference to another', or to her depth: 'They likewise call the number of feet that a vessel sinks in the water, the ship's gage.' The word more generally refers to '[a] fixed or standard measure or scale of measurement' (*OED*).

Strether's own complex and mediated landing, made up of shades of difference, as well as 'tetherings' to memories of arrivals past, presents itself as 'early signs that his errand would be none of the simplest' (*A* p.4).⁵² It thus anticipates the ways in which the transatlantic crossing, and particularly its celerity or simplicity, will become a matter of testimony in the novel.

Of James's fictions, *The Ambassadors* most registers a tension between action and accountability as fraught by the issue of the ocean voyage. The question of 'doing' refers itself to the equally central and vexed question of moving, and this question is itself nervously reworked in terms of how the action of moving (or removing) might be represented: via cable or letter or in terms of moral justification. Strether explains to Maria Gostrey 'that without some definite word from him now that will enable me to speak to them over there of our sailing—or at least of mine, giving them some sort of date—my responsibility becomes uncomfortable and my situation awkward' (*A* p.133). In his *Notebooks*, James reflects that:

If it would have been simple to be able to 'write back': 'It's all right; he consents to come; I come with him, I bring him [...] we sail about the middle of next month': so likewise it would have been comparatively plain-going to have to say: 'He absolutely won't come at all—and you'll have to come out yourself; so that [...] I shall just [...] take ship to rejoin you three or four weeks hence' ... (*CN* p.561)

It is perhaps having already used the word 'sail' in its literal sense that James uses 'plain-going' in lieu of 'plain-sailing', intimating that 'sailing' and being 'plain', or 'simple', are for the Pococks interchangeable.⁵³ Strether himself uses the word to inform Chad of his sister or family's intentions to travel: 'They'll simply embark', or 'She has come out just simply to

⁵² Poole has noted the 'tethering' implicit in Strether's own name (Poole, 'Introduction', in *The Ambassadors*, pp.xv-xxxv, p.xvii). The landing-stage was itself 'kept in position by mooring-chains, so strong and big that they had to be specially wrought for the purpose' (Richard Beynton, 'Where the Ships Come In', *Young England* [date unknown], 64-67, p.64).

⁵³ In *The Wings of the Dove*, James's narrator uses the phrase 'comparatively plain sailing' figuratively, to indicate Kate's surety that Milly 'had a treasure to hide'—or rather the simplicity of Milly's having a secret (*WOD*, II, p.152, p.153).

take you home' (*A* p.263). Action and accountability are conflated by the crossing for Mrs Newsome, for whom to 'take ship' or 'sail' is, as a practical action, also the only intelligible response. When she dispatches a second 'deputation' (*A* p.254) headed by her daughter, to pick up Chad (and now, Strether) the latter reflects to Jim Pocock '[t]hat she should do something was, no doubt, inevitable, and your wife has therefore, of course, come out to act.' Jim's qualification—'She never comes out but she *does* act'—emphasizes that for the Pococks travel is synonymous with decisive action (*A* p.275). As Sarah herself 'piercingly' makes clear: 'I've come because—well, because we do come' (*A* pp.282-3). That the Pococks are thorough may be ascertained in terms of their capacity to cross the sea. '[T]hey always get there', Jim remarks to Strether, who nervously concurs: 'They do indeed—they always get there!' (*A* pp.275-76). When they do get there it is with characteristic punctuality:

They had come straight from Havre, having sailed from New York to that port, and having also, thanks to a happy voyage, made land with a promptitude that left Chad Newsome, who had meant to meet them at the dock, belated. He received their telegram, with the announcement of their immediate further advance, just as he was taking the train for Havre, so that nothing remained for him but to await them in Paris. (*A* pp.257-78)

The Pococks' 'promptitude' evinces the increasing rapidity of transatlantic journeying as well as their own alacrity.⁵⁴ Such prompt arrivals and belated dockside meetings are something of a tradition in James's fiction. Roderick Hudson also fails to meet his visiting relatives at Leghorn, in large part due to his own fecklessness, though Mary Garland also acknowledges that 'the voyage had been surprisingly rapid' and that 'their arrival was a trifle premature'.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Baedeker lists 'the average duration of the passage across the Atlantic' as 8-10 ½ days in its 1887 edition, 6-10 in 1896, 6-9 in 1900, and 5-9 in 1908 (Karl Baedeker, *London and its environs: a handbook for travellers* (Leipsic: Baedeker, 1887-1908), p.4).

⁵⁵ Mrs Hudson and Mary travel 'in one of the small steamers', and having telegraphed that they 'were to sail immediately' from New York, the narrator suggests a longish voyage: 'They would arrive,

In ‘Four Meetings’ (1877), the narrator goes to Havre to greet his sister and brother-in-law, ‘who had written me that they were about to arrive’, only to find ‘[his] relatives already established’, ‘the steamer [...] already in’, and himself ‘nearly two hours late’ (p.46). And in *Confidence* (1879), Bernard Longueville ‘embark[s] at two days’ notice’ for New York, a fortnight earlier than [...] he had written to Gordon [Wright] to expect him’.⁵⁶ Strether’s own arrival at Liverpool is before the expected time (he both enjoys and frets about ‘having got in so early’). Yet as we have seen, this arrival is itself attended by delays and negotiations, as well as haunted by the voyage itself.

[Re]Moving Chad

‘He must *do* the thing he came out for. He must carry the young man home in triumph’ (*CN*
p.552)

The transportation of Chad Newsome from Paris to Woollett, Massachusetts—‘gagged and strapped down, carried on board resisting, kicking’ if necessary— is Strether’s sole mission and purpose in *The Ambassadors* (*A* p.238). As he breathlessly announces at their first encounter: ‘I’ve come [...] to make you break with everything, neither more nor less, and take you straight home [...]!’ (*A* p.109). The Pococks and Mrs Newsome suspect Chad’s lengthy stay in Europe is due to his entanglement with some ‘wicked woman’ (*A* p.41). Strether’s future marriage to Mrs Newsome depends upon successfully persuading Chad to return to America to take up the family business, and therefore, ‘It’s a question of an immediate rupture and an immediate return’ (*A* p.110). But, by the end of the novel, the ambassador from Woollett has completely reversed his position: ‘“It’s not a question of advising you not to go,” Strether said, “but of absolutely preventing you, if possible, from so much as thinking of it” ’ (p.447).

therefore, in less than a month’ (*RH*, II, p.37, pp.35-36). In *The Ambassadors*, the crossing is represented as considerably shorter—a matter of ‘a few days’ (*A* p.129).

⁵⁶ On arrival, Bernard unexpectedly bumps into Gordon’s wife Blanche, who jokes that it must have taken him ‘[t]hree days’ to ‘cross the Atlantic’ (*Confidence*, p.171).

Whether advised or actively prevented, the ‘question’ of the voyage assumes an emphasis disproportionate to, and apart from, its usual goal – to see Europe. For the Pococks and Mrs Newsome, the crossing is an objective as opposed to a mere means. Strether’s voyage is undertaken not in order to visit Paris, but only that he might compel Chad to leave it, and in this sense assumes an almost autotelic status: ‘The only thing I’ve any business to like is to feel that I’m moving him’ (*A* p.130). This is also, and somewhat oddly, the view taken with respect to other American tourists by Strether’s particular ally Maria Gostrey, who proclaims herself ‘a sort of superior “courier-maid”’: ‘I’m a general guide—to “Europe,” [...] I wait for people—I put them through. I pick them up—I set them down’ (*A* p.14). Maria’s office as ‘an agent for repatriation’ resembles Hawthorne’s as Consul at Liverpool in *Our Old Home* (1863): ‘Sitting, as it were, in the gateway between the Old World and the New, where the steamers and packets landed the greater part of our wandering countrymen, and received them again when their wanderings were done’.⁵⁷ Her habit of ‘taking people about’ consists in preparing them for departure.

‘[...] They want to go back.’

‘And you want them to go!’ Strether gaily concluded.

‘I always want them to go, and I send them as fast as I can.’

‘Oh, I know—you take them to Liverpool.’ (*A* pp.26-27)

Maria’s function points both to the extraordinary importance attached to the act of crossing the ocean in the novel, and to its consistent association with reversal or negation. Strether’s arrival at the start of the novel thus coincides with Waymarsh’s non-arrival.⁵⁸ (Re)moving Chad is to justify Strether’s moving as well, as he explains to Little Bilham:

⁵⁷ Hawthorne, *Our Old Home*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder, 1863), I, p.11. Whereas Hawthorne’s duty was professional, Maria ‘calls herself the general *amateur-courier*. She comes over with girls. She goes back with girls. She meets girls at Liverpool, at Genoa, at Bremen—she has even been known to meet boys. She sees people through. [...] She knows all the trains’ (*CN* p.546 my emphasis).

⁵⁸ Watt notes that Strether’s arrival is also marked by an ‘abundance of negatives’, a quality which ‘enacts Strether’s tendency to hesitation and qualification’ (Watt, ‘The First Paragraph’, p.80).

‘... [W]hat did I come out for but to save him?’

‘Yes—to remove him.’

‘To save him *by* removal [...]’ (*A* p.210)

Each crossing is also attended by an equal and opposite non-crossing in the form of Mrs Newsome; the motivating presence behind, and absent party to, all transatlantic journeys in the novel.⁵⁹ In his *Notebooks*, James remarks that ‘nothing, of course, can be more artistically interesting than [...] to make her always out of it, yet always *of* it, always absent, yet always felt’ (*CN* p.548). The novel is haunted by the presence of Mrs Newsome, who as an absent passenger crossing the ocean with each of her ambassadors takes on the shape of dangers present within the voyage itself. When Sarah Pocock arrives in her mother’s absence but also as her proxy, Strether informs Maria that ‘[i]t was [...] the woman herself [...] the whole moral and intellectual being or block, that Sarah brought me over to take or to leave’ (*A* p.393).

‘One never does, I suppose’, Miss Gostrey concurred, ‘realize in advance, in such a case, the size, as you may say, of the block. Little by little it looms up. It has been looming for you more and more, till at last you see it all.’

‘I see it all,’ he absently echoed, while his eyes might have been fixing some particularly large iceberg in a cool blue northern sea. (*A* p.393)

Beyond its indication of Mrs Newsome’s *froideur*, the image of the iceberg represents an obstructive, perilous presence in the transatlantic crossing, whose visibility is of paramount importance. ‘Looming’ is a word Strether also uses as he apprehensively awaits Sarah Pocock, then at sea: ‘She loomed at him larger than life; she increased in volume as she came’

⁵⁹ Ellmann points out that ‘Mrs Newsome’s absence instigates the transatlantic commerce of the novel’ (*Nets of Modernism*, p.41). As Seidel has observed: ‘It is of great importance to *The Ambassadors* that so much of its represented action is controlled by an unrepresented figure’ (‘The Lone Exile’, p.137).

(*A* p.257), and in both instances James implies its nautical meaning. This sense remains even when Sarah, who ‘incline[s] to the massive’ (*A* p.266), ‘steam[s] up’ (*A* p.267) at the railway station, for the Pococks’ arrival by sea is so immediate as to be conflated, in one smooth directive, with their arrival by train.⁶⁰ Sarah’s appearance brings Mrs Newsome ‘suddenly’ before Strether: ‘He had [...] sounded the whole depth, had gasped at what he might have lost’ (*A* p.267). The novel is full of such ‘soundings’, with ‘Chad’s manner’ providing the ‘fathomless medium’ (*A* p.127).

Mrs Newsome’s emphatic absence—an effect of her not making the journey, and of Strether’s making it on her behalf—is explicitly associated with the voyage. James puts the arrangement in suitably chiasmic terms: ‘He has come out on a friendly mission—to render, that is, a service [...] to [...] a friend who couldn’t come’ (*CN* p.547). This person herself ‘has, from year to year and from month to month, failed to achieve the move’ (*CN* p.548):

There has been a plan of *her* coming, but many personal and other things [...] have interposed and again checked her; a particular consideration which presently comes out for us has in fact above all interfered. There had been a question, if she *had* come, of Strether’s coming with her; then there had been a question of her coming, as it were, with *him*. (*CN* p.551)

‘Coming out’, largely construed as an act of obligation in the novel, additionally assumes an interpretative duty here: that which ‘comes out for’ the reader. The interrogative quality of these putative journeys – the ‘question[s]’ attached to them – anticipates how Strether’s ‘coming out’ will make him answerable to Mrs Newsome. As John Landau points out, it is the ‘condition’ of Mrs Newsome’s ‘enabling absence’ that both ‘calls into being the story of

⁶⁰ The first entry given by the *OED* for this ‘seaman’s term’ is from John Smith’s *A Sea Grammar* (1627): ‘The looming of a ship is her prospectiue, that is, as she doth shew great or little.’

James's hero' and creates 'the situation in which he is called on to explain or represent a distant immediacy'.⁶¹

The idea of the voyage as a surrogate or frustrated act has its precedent in James's fiction, where a voyage is made momentous through its cancellation, deferral, or sacrifice. An arrival that becomes an immediate departure, or a voyage that never takes place but is always in the offing, are variations upon a theme in which the transatlantic crossing is reversed, revoked, or its guiding impetus converted – like Strether himself – into 'an engine for keeping still' (*A* p.244). The 'brooding parent' of 'Europe' (1900) continually insists upon her daughters making the journey (having made it herself, long ago), and strategically prevents them each time they are ready to embark: 'Exceptionally prepared [...] for going, they yet couldn't leave their immemorial mother [...] who on the occasion of each proposed start announced her approaching end' (*LCFW* p.1244). In 'Four Meetings' (1877), another American woman eager to see Europe is cut off at Havre – 'a place of transit through which transit should be rapid' – by a cousin who takes her travelling money to pay his debts. The 'little lady of the steamer', as she is dubbed, re-embarks on 'the American ship' the day after her arrival, the narrator reflecting that 'the poor girl had been about thirteen hours in Europe'.⁶² Launchings and crossings are often sacrificial or vicarious actions in James's fiction, suggesting Strether's own rueful 'kind of traffic' (*A* p.263).

A particular way in which the voyage is made both demonstrative and answerable is through its conveyance of the marriage proposal. For Christopher Newman, re-embarking for Europe on behalf of Madame de Cintré, the crossing counteracts his sense of being 'a helpless loafer': 'He had nothing to do *here*, he sometimes said to himself; but there was something beyond the ocean that he was still to do'.⁶³ Caspar Goodwood's journey 'out in the steamer' in pursuit of Isabel Archer likewise marks him – in the admiring judgment of fellow passenger Henrietta Stackpole – as 'a man of action' (*PL* p.82, p.84). For Isabel, Goodwood's

⁶¹ John Landau, *A Thing Divided: Representation in the Late Novels of Henry James* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), p.60, p.64.

⁶² 'Four Meetings', p.48, p.47, p.52.

⁶³ *The American*, II, p.278.

‘terrible journeys’ elicit the need for a response, having the effect of ‘remonstrance [and] rebuke’, and inspiring ‘the desire to defend herself’ (*PL* p.291, p.290).

In the case of Strether and Mrs Newsome, James’s notes for *The Ambassadors* suggest practical and social reasons for the delegation of the voyage. It is a ‘question’ of the propriety of their crossing together (of Strether’s ‘coming with her [...] of her coming [...] with *him*’) that prevents Mrs Newsome from coming out at all. In ‘The Patagonia’, it is conversely the compromising factor of male company during the voyage that causes Grace Mavis to jump overboard; constituting, for the narrator, a glaring absence to be explained to her fiancé upon arrival. In her different circumstances, Mrs Newsome’s reservation seems ironic, given that Strether’s journey is itself a ‘condition’ of their marriage.⁶⁴

James puns upon the two senses of ‘condition’ (as a stipulation and as a quality or environment) in ‘The Great Condition’ (1899), a story roughly contemporaneous with *The Ambassadors*, in which the ocean crossing is similarly determinative in settling a provisional offer of marriage. The story is another instance, in James’s fiction, of a voyage elided but exerting an influence upon subsequent events, opening with the arrival of Bertram Braddle and Henry Chilver at Liverpool. In the course of a six-day passage from New York, Braddle has become hastily and romantically attached to a fellow passenger, Mrs Damerel. Keen to propose, Braddle is yet troubled by his inability to ‘place’ his would-be fiancée, and by her seeming lack of ‘references’. As he vaguely explains to Chilver, it is some sense that her ‘record is inaccessible’ or ‘beyond verification’; that there might be ‘something or other in her life; [...] some chapter in the book difficult to read aloud – some unlucky page she’d like to tear out’.⁶⁵

The eponymous ‘condition’ refers both to Mrs Damerel’s stipulation that Braddle trust her enough to wait till they are married before questioning her about her past, and to the ‘conditions’ (the crossing) in which they meet. Chilver reflects that

⁶⁴ The word is used of Mrs Newsome’s stipulation, by Maria Gostrey: ‘I see it, her condition, as behind and beneath you’ (*A* p.44).

⁶⁵ ‘The Great Condition’, p.14.

[h]e knew as little about her as Braddle knew, and it was his conviction that Braddle's ignorance had kept regular step with all the rest of the conditions. These conditions were, to begin with, that, seated next her at table for the very first repast, Bertram had struck up with her a friendship of which the leaps and bounds were, in the social, the sentimental sphere, not less remarkable than those with which the great hurrying ship took its way through the sea. They were, further, that, unlike all the other women, so numerous and, in the fine weather, so 'chatty', she had succeeded in incurring the acquaintance of nobody in the immense company but themselves.⁶⁶

The tale concludes with a twist characteristic of James. Braddle gives up Mrs Damerel, not being able to resolve his doubt. What she finally discloses is that she had nothing to hide:

He appealed, in his stupefaction, to the immensity of the vacancy itself. 'There's *nothing*'?

She made no answer for a moment, only looking [...] so far away that her eyes might have been fixed on the blue Pacific. 'There's the upshot of your inquiry'.

Braddle's appeal is also a statement—'There's *nothing*'—which his interlocutor aligns with 'the blue Pacific' itself. Recalling James's 'emphatic zero', the ocean represents the bewildering 'vacancy' of Miss Damerel's history: an absence into which Braddle reads ominous and positive 'things'. Indeed, Chilver identifies the difficulty as one of estimation: 'You seem to [...] see her as a column of figures [...] which, when you add them up, make only a total of doubt'.⁶⁷ His description associates Mrs Damerel with other incalculable American girls met at sea, such as Pandora Day – who 'feel[s] like a kind of blackboard' waiting to be 'chalked up' by Customs – and Grace Mavis (of 'The Patagonia'), obsessively

⁶⁶ 'The Great Condition', p.10.

⁶⁷ 'The Great Condition', p.37, p.15.

scrutinized by her fellow passengers.⁶⁸ Mrs Damerel's gaze also suggests Strether's own meditative 'fixing' upon the iceberg of Mrs Newsome, his ability 'at last [to] see it all' (*A* p.393). In each case an absence assumes an emphatic presence.

II.

THE CROSSING

'The Realising Sense'

James's final voyage was on the *Mauretania*, a ship whose five-day record was never outdone, and which represented the last word in speed and comfort (*fig. 4*).⁶⁹

I've never made, of course, an easier or quicker passage—great runs of 565 to 585 miles a day—and my sensations and sentiments have been attuned to the wondrous process. The enormous ship has only half its complement of passengers (at this mid-season time), and that has meant a luxury of space, service, and general ease and amplitude.⁷⁰

The 'sensations' of ocean travel in 1911 differed greatly from those James's family had endured when, on 19 October 1843 and with the infant Henry in tow, they had embarked for Liverpool on the *Great Western*—the first steamship to successfully cross the Atlantic—for a journey which took fifteen days (*fig. 5*).⁷¹ On 27 June 1855, the family returned to Europe on the *Atlantic*, which, as John Malcolm Brinnin notes, 'enclosed sea-going niceties previously

⁶⁸ 'Pandora', *New York Sun*, 8 June 1884, 1-2, p.1.

⁶⁹ To Alice Howe Gibbens James, 2 August 1904, *Dear Munificent Friends: Henry James's Letters to Four Women*, ed. by Susan E. Gunter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp.50-51, p.50.

⁷⁰ To Mrs. William James, 6 August 1911, *HJL*, iv, pp.578-79, p.578.

⁷¹ By the time the *Great Western* made her maiden voyage from Bristol to New York on 8 April 1838, Fox records, '[s]everal steamers had already crossed the ocean, but not under continuous power or as part of a regularly scheduled service' (Fox, *The Ocean Railway*, p.73). In a letter to his mother, 1 May 1844, HJ Sr. reports his disappointment at the news 'that she would never again cross the Atlantic'; already full of praise, however, for the latest ship: 'The new steamer which we saw is the most magnificent vessel I ever beheld. [...] She offers a strong temptation to us to sail with her' (qtd. in Robert C. LeClair, *Young Henry James 1843-1870* (New York: Bookman 1955), pp.28-30, p.30). LeClair notes that '[t]he ship here referred to was probably the *Great Britain*, launched on July 19, 1843' (p.38).

unknown'. The ship was '[s]team-heated', with a 'huge ice room', 'bathrooms', and 'a barber shop which, for its time, ranked as nothing short of a marvel'.⁷² Despite such facilities, the James's eleven-day journey afforded 'a very unpleasant passage' of 'cold weather and stormy seas', during which they 'saw two or three icebergs', and Mrs James and the children were 'quite sick'.⁷³ On 12 June 1858, they travelled back to America on the *Persia*, three months ahead of Henry Adams, who would cross the other way on the same ship. In his *Education*, Adams pronounced the *Persia* 'the pride of Captain Judkins and the Cunard Line; the newest, largest and fastest steamship afloat'. Of his voyage over thirty years later on the *Teutonic*, however, Adams implicitly recalls the heavy weather he endured on ships like the *Persia*, reporting the striking developments in ocean travel in just over a decade:

He had not crossed the Atlantic for a dozen years, and had never seen an ocean steamer of the new type. [...] That he should be able to eat his dinner through a week of howling winter gales was a miracle. That he should have a deck stateroom, with fresh air, and read all night, if he chose, by electric light, was matter for more wonder than life had yet supplied, in its old forms.⁷⁴

James's fiction registers the development of ocean liners; their increasing stature and interiority. In 'A Landscape Painter' (1866), one of James's invariably 'retired' sea-captains, Richard Blunt, complains that 'a tavern is only half a house, just as one of these new-fashioned screw-propellers is only half a ship'.⁷⁵ The 'immense labyrinthine steamer' upon

⁷² John Malcolm Brinnin, *The Sway of the Grand Saloon: A Social History of the North Atlantic* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.172. The *Atlantic* also introduced the smoking room, which features in several of James's descriptions of shipboard life.

⁷³ HJ Sr. to his mother, 11 July 1855, qtd. in LeClair, *Young Henry James*, pp.152-53, p.152).

⁷⁴ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p.71, pp.318-19.

⁷⁵ 'A Landscape Painter', *Atlantic Monthly*, 17 (February 1866), 182-202, p.185. 'Blunt' is revised to the more nautical-sounding 'Quartermain' in the 1885 edition of the tale. James himself had travelled on the last paddle-wheel steamer to ply the transatlantic route, the *Scotia*.

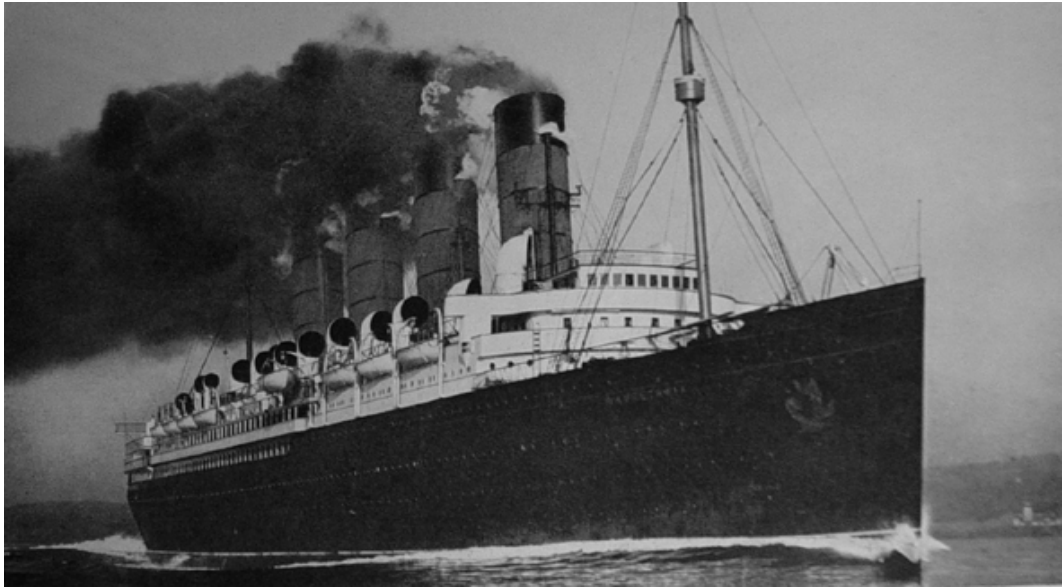


Figure 4: *The Mauretania*

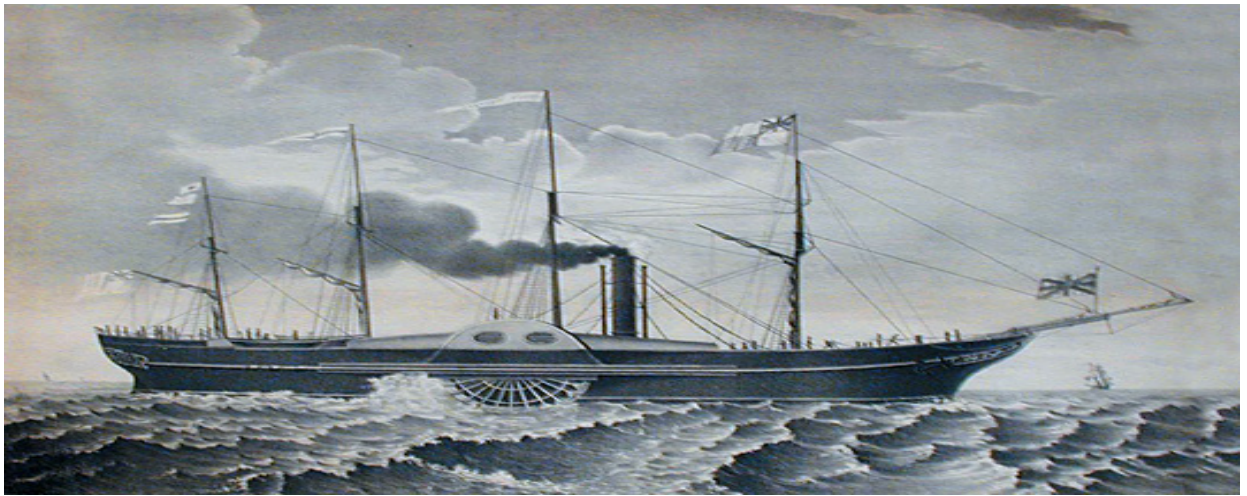


Figure 5: *The Great Western*

which Percy Beaumont and Lord Lambeth embark in ‘An International Episode’ (1878) is ‘an extraordinary mixture of a ship and an hotel’ boasting a ‘state-room [...] embellished with

gas-lamps, mirrors *en pied* and sculptured furniture'.⁷⁶ By 'The Death of the Lion' (1894), the glare of an unscrupulous and bespectacled journalist can suggest 'the electric headlights of some monstrous modern ship'.⁷⁷ And in *The Golden Bowl*, Maggie Verver declares her trust in Prince Amerigo in terms of 'water-tight compartments' (*GB* p.15).⁷⁸ James's characters distinguish good from 'bad ships' ('Boston steamers'), while also recognising ocean liners as sites of interest in themselves.⁷⁹ When the American family in *Daisy Miller* come to evaluate the relative merits of destinations such as Rome and Zurich, ten-year-old Randolph Miller names 'The City of Richmond' as '[t]he best place we've seen'. The declaration requires some translating: '“He means the ship”, his mother explained. “We crossed in that ship. Randolph had a good time on the City of Richmond”' (p.46).

Nevertheless, the most seaworthy of James's characters seem unable or unwilling to occupy such spaces for long. In 'Georgina's Reasons' (1884), Captain Raymond Benyon spends his time 'knocking about the salt parts of the globe with a few feet square on a rolling frigate for his only home' and longing for an 'interior'.⁸⁰ In an analogy whose frequency has been noted, Beaumont and Lambeth's opulent and 'swaying' American steamer suggests both entertainment and unreality: 'a wonderful place arranged like a theatre' with 'people handing about bills of fare as if they had been programmes'.⁸¹ The American girl makes her brief, yet conspicuous appearance aboard-ship in just four of James's tales, not counting 'The Patagonia'. En route to Liverpool in 'An International Episode' (1878), Bessie Alden receives

⁷⁶ 'An International Episode' (1878), p.693. The size of 'this huge white vessel', which Beaumont and Lambeth use only to cross from New York to Newport, is emphasized by their American host, Mr. Westgate, who offers his 'leadership' through its 'innumerable and interminable corridors and cabins' (p.693).

⁷⁷ 'The Death of the Lion', *The Yellow Book*, 1 (April 1894), 7-52, p.18. Electric light was introduced on the *Columbia* in 1880 with the advent of Edison's incandescent bulb in 1879.

⁷⁸ These compartments, 'of which one could be filled with water and the ship, buoyed by the remaining seven-eighths [...] of her hull, still float in safety', were recognized as an 'improvement of great value' (Smith, *The Ocean Carrier*, p.15). The safety mechanism is an effective analogy for Maggie's own efficient, compartmentalized way of dealing with relations in the novel, in which communications are judiciously sealed off to allow the central marriages to stay afloat. James himself travelled on the *Great Britain*, whose maiden voyage for New York on 26 July 1843 'made history in ship construction', being 'the first trans-Atlantic steamer to be made of iron, the first to be divided into watertight compartments and the first to be driven by a screw propeller' (John Merrett, *How Britain's Waterways are Used* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1958), p.99).

⁷⁹ *The Bostonians*, p.199.

⁸⁰ 'Georgina's Reasons', *New York Sun*, 3 August 1884, pp.1-2, p.1.

⁸¹ 'An International Episode', p.693.

a lecture on the customs of the English aristocracy. In James's epistolary tale, 'A Point of View' (1882), Aurora Church reports enjoying her promenades around deck on the arms of male admirers, and, most substantially, in 'Pandora' (1884), the German diplomat, Count Otto, encounters a self-made American girl among a crowd of emigrants on a North German Liner sailing from Bremen to Washington. Ships never assume the status of the buildings in James's fiction. For the characters that inhabit James's few sea-tales, it is the deck and the judicious placement of a deck chair from which to watch other passengers that is important. In 'Pandora', the 'long deck' forming 'a white spot in the sharp black circle of the ocean and in the intense sea-light' suggests equally a blind spot and a moment of heightened, saturated visibility.⁸²

James's earliest reports of his own crossings evince a sort of general disbelief about them. Writing to Thomas Sergeant Perry, 3 September 1860, from Paris, the young James whimsically concludes: 'Now I've only time to close if I wish my letter to reach Liverpool in time for Saturday's steamer; if I leave it I must myself be its bearer. When it reaches you I shall be on the [...]' ⁸³ (fig.6).

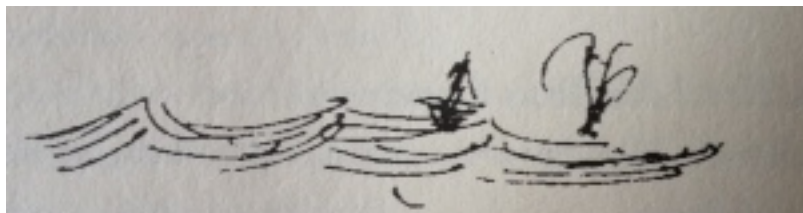


Figure 6: ' ... '

Following his first year of adult life in Europe, James booked his passage back to America on the *Scotia* in April 1870, a fact he greeted with gloomy and superstitious reticence. 'I have no heart to dilate on it', he wrote to Grace Norton. 'It's a good deal like dying'.⁸⁴ In July 1874, from Baden Baden and on the verge of ending another sojourn abroad, James wrote to Sarah Butler Wister of his decision to 'sail for America', adding that 'I am extremely impatient to

⁸² 'Pandora', *New York Sun*, 1 June 1884, pp.1-2, p.2.

⁸³ To Thomas Sergeant Perry, 3 September 1860, *CL 1855-72*, I, pp.69-70, p.70.

⁸⁴ To Grace Norton, 28 April 1870, *CL 1855-72*, II, pp.354-55, p.355.

have it over, to start & to arrive'. The letter relays his intended movements: to 'go down the Rhine to Holland, to take a look at Dutch pictures [...] & thence cross to England for a fortnight before sailing', but treats the voyage itself as inscrutable: 'Think of me after that as in a not-to-be-thought-of state for ten days'.⁸⁵

While records of his earlier voyages are compromised by seasickness, James's increasingly rapid crossings register a disconcerting sharpness of transition. As Edel notes, as early as James's voyage on the *Werra* in December 1882: 'The suddenness of Henry's jump from London to Boston had left him in a daze. He wrote to his publisher that he could touch the red brick houses opposite with his pen-point and found himself wondering [...] what had come over Bolton Street.'⁸⁶ Returning to America after a twenty-year absence, James crossed on the *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, finding again that '[m]y own so very rapid voyage [...] made the bridge seem strangely short and easy'.⁸⁷ James's final crossing to Europe, 'on the big smooth swift *Mauretania*', renewed the impression. The author was 'left [...] with such a sense as of a few hours' pampered *ferry*, making a mere mouthful of the waste of waters, that I kind of promise myself to come back "all the time"'.⁸⁸ The assessment recalls James's dubious appraisal of the Pullman's progress in *The American Scene*, a vehicle capable of making a 'mere mouthful' of 'the mighty Mississippi', and which he charges with eliding 'gradations, transitions, differences' (*AS* p.305). James's imagining, in 'Chester', of a voyage without 'sensible gradation' is practically effected in his crossing on *The Mauretania*: 'I have never been so blandly just lifted across'.⁸⁹

'Blandly' is also ambiguously positive, suggesting a crossing that is both without turbulence and without incident; and also without an *awareness* of these things (it is almost 'blindly'). Writing from the ship, James had also used the word about an eminent yet obtuse

⁸⁵ To Sarah Butler Wister, 29 July 1874, *CL* 1872-76, II, pp.192-96, p.193, p.195.

⁸⁶ Edel, *Henry James: The Conquest of London* (London: Hart-Davis, 1962), p.490.

⁸⁷ To James B. Pinker, 14 September 1904, *HJL*, IV, pp.321-24, p.323. The *Kaiser* was, HJ notes proudly, 'considered abnormally fast' (to Alice Howe Gibbens James, 2 August 1904, *Dear Munificent Friends*, pp.50-51, p.50). HJ indicates its impressive scale in a hurried note to William: 'Voyage five days thirteen hours—ship colossal—but crowd excessive' (to Mr. and Mrs. William James, 31 August 1904, *HJL*, IV, p.319).

⁸⁸ To Mrs. William James, 6 August 1911, *HJL*, IV, pp.578-79, p.578.

⁸⁹ To Miss Ellen Emmett, 15 August 1911, *LHJ*, II, pp.196-99, p.199.

passenger: ‘The great bland simple deaf street-boy-faced Edison is on board’, describing how he whiled away the time talking to him about Peggy, and watching Burgess participate in ‘a foot-race on deck’ (fig. 7).⁹⁰

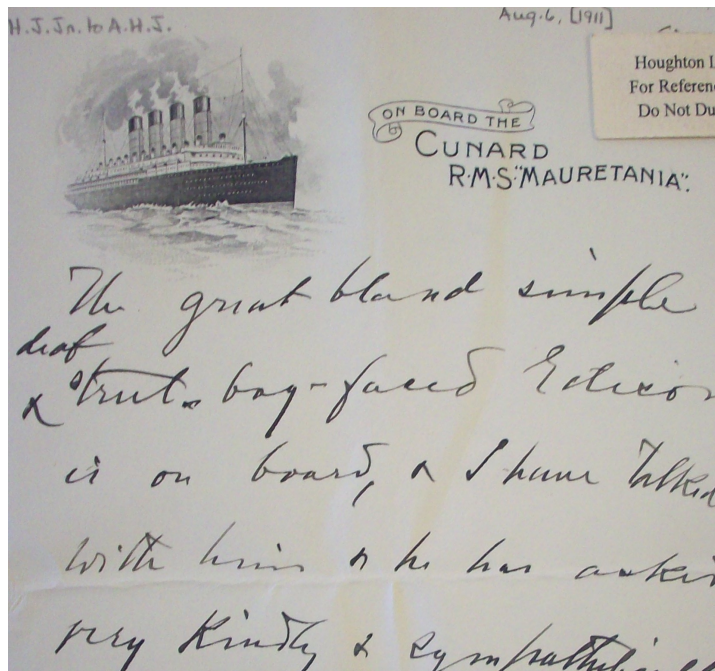


Figure 7: from the *Mauretania*

James had a phrase for this difficulty, which he uses in a letter to his family having completed his first independent crossing on the *China*. James arrived at Liverpool on 27 February 1869. He had enjoyed ‘a magnificent run fr[om] N. Y. of just ten days. Favo[u]ring winds [...] clear skies & a mild air, without terrors or tempests [...] all that we could have wished’. James pronounces ‘the servants excellent, the company small & genial, & the captain the most civil of British tars’. ‘As for the ship’, James writes, ‘she’s a brick’.

I confess, however, that to myself individually, a realising sense of all this

magnificence was somewhat wanting. In the way of sea-sickness I was both better &

⁹⁰ The latter was ‘kept from winning the first prize [...] only by not having like his competitors India-rubber soles—he slipped a little on a turn. But as it was he won prize second’ (to Mrs. William James, 6 August 1911, *HJL*, IV, pp.578-79, p.578).

worse than I expected: better inasmuch as I was not as actively disordered as I feared & yet worse because I found that the best passage in the world is still a poor business for me.⁹¹

James attributes the unrealisable quality of his voyage to physically disabling turbulence: ‘cuddling about for ten days on a tossing deck’ (*CL-1855-72*, I, p.220). But the ‘realising sense’ of the Atlantic voyage continued to elude him. Nor was he the only author for whom the crossing lacked a certain reality. For Adams, the ‘sensation’ of ‘wandering over the dark purple ocean, with its purple sense of solitude and void’ remained ‘the most unearthly he had felt’.⁹² Howells’s recollection of his journey on the *City of Glasgow* in November 1861—‘a sullen void without event or variety’—is also characterized by vagueness: ‘I think there were at times whales spouting at safe removes, but I will not be sure there were’, or, ‘I suppose that I read a good deal, but what books I cannot think’. Recalling ‘a good stretch of flush deck’, Howells supposes that ‘I must have walked up and down’ it, ‘but if with anyone else it [...] has utterly perished from the mind’. Though he would draw upon the voyage for ‘a sea novel of mine’ years later, his impression of ‘the watery element’, a ‘monotony [...] that widened round me day after day’, was paradoxically that it lacked any retaining power: ‘[O]nce we had landed in Liverpool we were all, to all recollection of mine, wiped off the map of life together’.⁹³

James’s lack of ‘realising sense’ was experienced both as a passenger and a writer or reader. The same phrase appears in a much later letter to Robert Louis Stevenson, who had departed for New York in August 1887 on the *Ludgate Hill*, and whom James had waved off at Tilbury docks. Stevenson’s own letters to James contain lively and detailed evocations of the voyage—‘sixteen days at sea with a cargo of hay, matches, stallions, and monkeys, [...] and plenty of sailors to talk to’—but James found such ‘adventures’ ungraspable. ‘I miss you

⁹¹ To HJ Sr., Mary Walsh James, and Family, 27 February 1869, *CL 1855-72*, I, pp.219-22, pp.219-20.

⁹² Adams, *The Education*, p.316.

⁹³ Howells, ‘Overland to Venice’, *Harper’s Monthly*, 137 (November 1918), 837-45, pp.839-40.

shockingly’, he wrote, ‘[...] and I don’t in the least follow you—I can’t go with you (I mean in conceptive faculty and the “realising sense”)’.⁹⁴

The ways in which the crossing tasked the writer’s ‘conceptive faculty’ (as well as his digestive system) were of interest to James. His essays on Anthony Trollope and Pierre Loti address, respectively, the writer-at-sea and the sea-writer; weighing on the one hand the needful conditions for representation (a strong stomach and bespoke writing-desk in one’s ‘sea-chamber’) and marvelling, on the other, at the union of ‘the sea-rover’ with ‘the man of expression’; his ability to combine ‘the experience of the navigator’ with ‘the faculty of expression’.⁹⁵

‘A poet and yet a sailor-man’

James’s inability to ‘follow’ Stevenson on his ‘adventures’ gestures both at the physical distance interposed by travel and the ‘conceptive’ stretch of the adventures themselves. As Conrad himself remarked, James’s own ‘knowledge of action’ was not concerned with ‘the romance of yard-arm and boarding pike’.⁹⁶ James himself confessed to Stevenson that ‘having neither a yacht, an island, an heroic nature, [...] nor a sea-stomach, I have to seek adventure in the humblest forms’.⁹⁷ In distinguishing his writings—‘the brineless things’ of ‘stay-at-home, lubberly friends’—from such ‘rovers of the deep’, James seems to contrast the lurid, eventful picaresque with his own subtle, and terrestrial, investigations of character.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ September 1887 (qtd. in *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship and Criticism*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (London: Hart-Davis, 1948), pp.122-23); to Robert Louis Stevenson, 29 April 1889, *HJL*, III, pp.255-56, p.255.

⁹⁵ I gratefully acknowledge Melanie Ross, as having referred me to HJ’s essays on Loti. James refers to Loti’s combined talents thus in his later Introduction to Loti’s *Impressions* (‘Introduction’, *Impressions*, by Pierre Loti (Westminster: Constable, 1898), pp.1-21, p. 4). In his essay on Trollope, James recalls that ‘as his voyages were many, it was his practice before sailing to come down to the ship and confer with the carpenter, who was instructed to rig up a rough writing-table in his small sea-chamber’ (‘Anthony Trollope’, *Century Magazine*, 26 (July 1883), 385-95, p.385).

⁹⁶ Conrad, ‘Henry James: an Appreciation’, *North American Review*, 180 (1 January 1905), 102-08, p.105.

⁹⁷ To Robert Louis Stevenson, 18 February 1891, *HJL*, III, pp.336-38, p.336.

⁹⁸ To Robert Louis Stevenson, 28 April 1890, *HJL*, III, pp.278-80, p.278.

This kind of conflation – between the voyage’s discomfort or endurance and its conceptual notice or representation – is made frequently and instinctively by James, suggesting that, for the author, the physical environment of the sea was inseparable from its treatment as a narrative subject. The particular representational difficulty created by the ocean, however, is also a source of James’s interest in it. In a letter to Conrad thanking him for his personally inscribed copy of *The Mirror and the Sea* (1906)—‘your beautiful sea-green volume’—James exclaims: ‘No one has *known*—for intellectual use—the things you know, & you have, as the artist of the whole matter, an authority that no one has approached.’ The sea is both Conrad’s subject and the ‘difficult medium’ within which he is immersed: ‘I find you in it all, *writing* wonderfully [...] You knock about in the wide waters of expression like the raciest and boldest of privateers’. Again, James emphasizes the rare luck of being receptive to the ocean as an environment: ‘I thank the powers who so mysteriously let you loose with such sensibilities, into such an undiscovered country—for sensibility.’⁹⁹

While the locations typically occupied by Conrad’s and James’s characters are very different, their novels exhibit atmospheric similarities and representational concerns which have led to their frequent pairing by critics. Just as Conrad ‘made his patterns of moral community out of the rugged but traditional ways of ships and sailors’, observes Richard Gill, James found his in the more elegant but no less traditional and familiar regimen of country-house life’.¹⁰⁰ Brian Artese has recently discussed James and Conrad’s mutual interest in testimony as a mode of narrative delivery; a quality of Conrad’s writing that James particularly praises in his receipt of *The Mirror of the Sea*: ‘Nothing you have done has more in it the root of the matter of *saying*’.¹⁰¹ While James’s narratives are worlds removed from *Treasure Island* or *Robinson Crusoe*, the kind of congruence that Edel detects between ‘The Beast in the Jungle’ and *The Heart of Darkness* is suggested by Robert Foulke’s definition of

⁹⁹ To Joseph Conrad, 1 November 1906, *Henry James: A Life in Letters*, ed. by Philip Horne (London: Viking, 1999), pp.439-40.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Gill, *Happy Rural Seat: The English Country-house and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p.28.

¹⁰¹ Brian Artese, *Testimony on Trial: Conrad, James, and the Contest for Modernism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

[another] paradigmatic ‘sea-voyage narrative’, whose conditions approximate those of James’s own fictional climates: ¹⁰²

In th[ese] fragmentary but self-contained world[s], seafarers have time on their hands, and they spend much of it standing watch—literally watching the interaction of ship, wind, and sea, while waiting for something, or nothing to happen. ¹⁰³

James identifies this kind of generative and problematic relationship between happening and watching as symptomatic of the ocean itself; that which separates ‘the man of action’ from ‘the man of observation’. In his essay on ‘Pierre Loti’ (1888), James draws this distinction even as he identifies rare exceptions, addressing the singular case of a writer who was ‘a “sailor-man” and yet a poet, a poet and yet a sailor-man’. ¹⁰⁴

The ocean-settings of Loti’s fiction, James suggests, themselves redefine notions of what constitutes action or adventure. Like James, Loti displays no regard for ‘plot’ nor for ‘action’ in the way of the adventure story. Rather, it is the ‘perfect blank’ of his sea-scapes that James finds suggestive—‘His scenery is exactly the absence of scenery’—and the inevitable ‘isolation’ of his characters, which lends them ‘a kind of heroic greatness’. ¹⁰⁵ James would explore this climate in ‘The Patagonia’, published the same year as his essay on Loti, and featuring a group of passengers confronting each other ‘in the blank of marine existence’ (p.770). It is this provoking ‘blank’ that James seems to identify as most commensurate with the voyage experience.

The events of James’s tale further resonate with James’s remarks on Loti, which conjoin the voyage with failures to witness. James reflects that ‘[t]he persons who see the

¹⁰² Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, p.526.

¹⁰³ Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp.8-9.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Pierre Loti’ (1888), in *Essays in London and Elsewhere* (New York: Harpers, 1893), pp.151-85, p.180. Conrad was another exception. HJ compares the two authors in a letter to Gosse, where he observes that Conrad’s ‘form’ is ‘more artistic than has been given to any “Tales of the Sea” among English writers and that approximates more than anything we have to the truth and beauty of the French Pierre Loti. *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* is in my opinion the very finest and strongest picture of the sea and sea-life that our language possesses—the masterpiece in a whole great class; and *Lord Jim* runs it very close’ (to Edmund Gosse, 26 June 1902, *HJL*, IV, pp.231-32, p.232).

¹⁰⁵ ‘Pierre Loti’, p.180, p.181.

great things are terribly apt not to be persons who can write or even talk about them; and the persons who can write about them, reproduce them in some way, are terribly apt not to be persons who see them.'

Many an artist will have felt his heart sink on questioning some travelled friend in vain. The travelled friend has not noticed or has nothing to say about things that must have had an inestimable suggestiveness. So we frame a sort of ideal of success, in which the man of action and the man of observation melt into each other. The transcendent result is a precious creature who knows the sea as well as Captain Marryat and writes about it as well—I can only say as well as Pierre Loti.¹⁰⁶

'The Patagonia' makes use of this ironic tension between action and observation, as passengers track and survey each other, highly visible under 'the strong sea light', and displaying a marked apprehension as to 'what's going to happen'. Its narration is also marked by a unanimous disclaiming of responsibility, however, as the 'most visible' passenger on board disappears without a trace: '[I]t's beyond every one, the way she escaped notice'.¹⁰⁷

Loti's epithet: 'a poet and yet a sailor-man', represents a variation of James's description of Anthony Trollope, 'a distinguished writer who was also an invulnerable sailor'.¹⁰⁸ The assessment harks back to their shared crossing on the *Bothnia* in 1875, whose turbulent yet monotonous passage James recounted in a letter to his family. The ship, he complained, had been 'uncomfortably crowded', and had 'bounced about', while an indifferent and indefatigable Trollope 'wrote novels in his state room all the morning (he does it literally every morning of his life, no matter where he may be)'. James equates the author's stolid personality with the tedium of the voyage itself: '[H]e is the dullest Briton of them all. Nothing happened, but I loathed and despised the sea more than ever'.¹⁰⁹ Trollope's

¹⁰⁶ 'Pierre Loti', p.163.

¹⁰⁷ 'The Patagonia', p.769, p.771, p.782.

¹⁰⁸ 'Anthony Trollope', p.385.

¹⁰⁹ To HJ Sr., Mary Walsh James, and Family, 1 November 1875, *CL 1855-76*, III, pp.3-6, pp.3-4.

steadfastness- at-sea remained a memorable source of irritation or impressiveness, to which James would refer more indulgently in his essay of 1883:

It was once the fortune of the author of these lines to cross the Atlantic in his company, and he has never forgotten the magnificent example of plain persistence that it was in the power of the eminent novelist to give on that occasion. The season was unpropitious, the vessel overcrowded, the voyage detestable, but Trollope [...]drove his pen as steadily on the tumbling ocean as in Montague Square [...] Trollope has been accused of being deficient in imagination, but in the face of such a fact as that the charge will scarcely seem just. The power to shut one's eyes, one's ears (to say nothing of another sense), upon the scenery of a pitching Cunarder and open them upon the loves and sorrows of Lily Dale [...] is certainly a faculty which could take to itself wings.¹¹⁰

Even as he ostensibly defends Trollope's creative 'faculty' against accusations of 'deficiency', James humorously reinstates the charge. Lauded as a virtue of 'imagination', this writer's grim 'persistence' is yet characterized as a kind of blindness: 'the power to shut one's eyes'. Loti's 'transcendent' ability to reconcile 'action' with 'observation'— to both experience the voyage and write about it—presents a contrast with Trollope's wilful occlusion of sea 'scenery' and with James's earlier association of him with the non-event of the voyage itself: (*Nothing happened*). James suggests that Trollope's invulnerability to the sea is also an insensibility to its effects; while his prolific and thick-skinned prose anticipates a contrast with Loti's spare yet generative 'void[s]'.

James's ironic association of Trollope's writing process—'abundant', 'invariable', and seemingly all-inclusive—with these kinds of omissions presents a suggestive context for

¹¹⁰ 'Anthony Trollope', p.385.

‘The Patagonia’.¹¹¹ While James’s *Notebooks* record that his inspiration for the tale derived from an anecdote related by Fanny Kemble—‘Admirable little dismal subject!’ (CN p.43)—Adeline Tintner has pointed out the striking similarities between ‘The Patagonia’ and an early story by Trollope, which also takes place during a transatlantic crossing, and likewise concerns the troubled conscience of a young woman travelling out to meet her future husband after a long engagement.¹¹² Whereas ‘The Journey to Panama’ (1861) is related from the frankly omniscient perspective, James’s tale is consciously limited by its first-person narrator. And the chief difference Tintner identifies about Trollope’s story in relation to ‘The Patagonia’ is its explicitness: a ‘chatty, garrulous atmosphere’, marked by its heroine’s frequent and candid communication of her thoughts and anxieties. By contrast, as Tintner notes, James presents his heroine as ‘essentially sealed in silence’.¹¹³

Trollope’s tale ends more fortuitously for its heroine, as Miss Viner’s much older fiancé dies before she arrives, leaving her a substantial fortune. The voyage also follows a different trajectory, for Trollope’s narrator rather dismissively asserts that ‘the great American line, transversing the Atlantic to New York and Boston with the regularity of clockwork’, has become ‘so much a matter of every day routine, that romance becomes scarce upon the route’.¹¹⁴ The analogy suggests Strether’s appraisal of Chad’s homeward inclination as ‘the swing of [a] pendulum’ across the ocean (*A* p.165), or James’s own epithet for Edith Wharton: ‘he called me the “pendulum-woman” because I crossed the ocean every year!’¹¹⁵ Yet Conrad would evoke the movement of the pendulum to suggest rather the vanishing act of the voyage upon arrival: ‘Landfall and Departure mark the rhythmical swing of a seaman’s

¹¹¹ James’s essay directly relates his anecdote about the crossing to his sense of Trollope’s ‘quantity’ and ‘abundance’: ‘Every day of his life he wrote a certain number of pages of his current tale, a number sacramental and invariable, independent of mood and place’ (‘Anthony Trollope’, p.385). In a review of Trollope’s novel *Miss Mackenzie*, James considers that Trollope’s ‘manner’ has ‘the virtues of the photograph’—‘Nothing is omitted’ (‘*Miss Mackenzie*: A Novel’, *The Nation*, 1 (13 July 1865), p.51).

¹¹² Adeline Tintner, ‘James’s “The Patagonia”: A Critique of Trollope’s “The Journey to Panama”’, *Studies in Short Fiction*, 32 (1995), 59-66.

¹¹³ Tintner, ‘James’s “The Patagonia”’, p.65, p.64.

¹¹⁴ Trollope, ‘The Journey to Panama’, in *The Victoria Regia: A Volume of Original Contributions in Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Adelaide A. Procter (London: Victoria Press, 1861), pp.187-215, p.188; Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea*, p.1.

¹¹⁵ Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, p.177.

life and of a ship's career. From land to land is the most concise definition of a ship's earthly fate'.¹¹⁶

James's tale exploits this tension between regularity and fatality. Early on in the tale, a passenger implicitly reinforces Trollope's claim, remarking that a long engagement to a lover overseas is 'an old, old story', one in which 'there's no more romance [...] than if she were going to be photographed' (p.717). In 1888, the same year in which 'The Patagonia' appeared in print, *Harpers Weekly* remarked upon the inevitability of shipboard romances with a wood engraving entitled 'The Old, Old Story' (fig.8).¹¹⁷ James makes use of this most predictable and conspicuous feature of the voyage to dramatize a discrepancy between the security of ocean travel and its ultimate unknowability.



Figure 8: 'An Old Old Story'

¹¹⁶ Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea*, p.1.

¹¹⁷ Qtd. by Coleman, *The Liners*, p.16.

'The Patagonia'

‘Keep on deck as much as possible—interest yourself in something—it does not matter what’—*American Guide to Europe* (1874)

James’s later heroines, however naïve, are typically sea-savvy, with an experience of ocean-travel that predates their narrative adventures. By the time she is fourteen, Isabel Archer has ‘been transported three times across the Atlantic’ (*PL* p.27). Maggie Verver boasts ‘a familiarity with ‘lines’’, from her ‘experience of continents and seas’, and Charlotte Stant arrives in London on the ‘steamer special’ from Southampton wearing ‘exactly the look of her adventurous situation, a suggestion [...] of winds and waves and custom-houses, of far countries and long journeys’ (*GB* p.10, p.32).

‘The Patagonia’ confronts its reader with a situation unique amongst James’s fictions: a narrative that takes place *before* arrival, and a heroine who boards a transatlantic steamship ‘without ever arriving at her destination’.¹¹⁸ The tale unfolds during a crossing from Boston to Liverpool, among whose passengers Grace Mavis is travelling to meet her fiancé following a long and wearisome engagement. In the course of the voyage, Grace forms an attachment to the worldly, Europeanized son of her chaperone, Jasper Nettlepoint, whose attentions rapidly make her the subject of gossip. Not the least interested spectator is James’s officious, first-person narrator, who eagerly observes the pair’s developing intimacy and finally intervenes to warn them of their reputation. Fearing the consequences of arrival, or unwilling to face her impending marriage, Grace jumps overboard as the ship approaches Liverpool.

The tale’s shipboard setting is directly conducive to a preoccupation with supervision and testimony. The narrator specifies that the steamer on which his crossing had actually been booked, the *Scandinavia*, has been substituted ‘at the eleventh hour’ by the older and

¹¹⁸ Christoph Ribbat, ‘“Attracted by a Dusky Object”: Henry James’s “The Patagonia” and its Atlantic Context’, *HJR*, 28 (2007), 1-12, p.2. Ribbat’s article represents the only sustained analysis of the tale’s setting on an ocean liner, though it is chiefly concerned with the imperialistic resonances in the story, arguing that ‘[t]he oceanic perspective links James’s fiction to the colonial imagination’ (p.2).

considerably less rapid *Patagonia*, whose ‘slow passage’ of ‘ten or twelve days’, was modelled on James’s delayed crossing on the *Atlas* in 1874.¹¹⁹ The eponymous *Patagonia* is a ship of the Cunard Line, renowned for its conservative social attitudes, its impeccable safety record, and the vigilance of its crew and captains. As Christoph Ribbat has pointed out, James’s tale derives no small part of its dramatic irony from the fact that Cunard prided itself on its complete passenger list, having—as its slogan ran—‘never lost a life’.¹²⁰ By the late nineteenth century, Cunard had become a by-word for reliability, and remained so well into the twentieth.¹²¹ Yet this record itself nourished a certain anticipatory anxiety. ‘It is true that the Cunard liners, during their long career, have been almost entirely exempt from maritime disaster’, cautiously allowed one article, advising steamship companies however to ‘think rather of what may happen than of what has not happened’.¹²²

In James’s tale, the protracted length of the voyage works to stimulate the passengers’ impatience, generating a demand for structure and incident.¹²³ The number of days a ship took in her crossing was, as we have seen, a matter of popular interest and anxiety due to the high competition amongst steamship companies and the not unforeseeable possibility of accident. For passengers themselves, however, counting the days, the hours, or taking the ship’s log also represented efforts to withstand the monotony of life at sea. As pocket watches ran down and travellers were left to rely on ship’s bells to regularize meal and bedtimes, it became

¹¹⁹ ‘The Patagonia’, p.707. Outlining the story in his *Notebooks*, James wrote: ‘It is a slow Boston Cunarder—a summer passage. The ship is changed [...] to an old substitute, as occurred when I went over, in 1874, in the *Atlas*’ (CN p.43).

¹²⁰ Ribbat, ‘Attracted by a Dusky Object’, p.1. ‘The *Cunard* steamers leave every Wednesday for Liverpool and Queenstown. [...] They are safe, comfortable, seaworthy, and are under command of the best seamen in the world. They have carried *hundreds of thousands of passengers and have never lost a life*’ (*American Guide to Europe* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1874), p. ix, original emphasis).

¹²¹ In *The Wings of the Dove*, Susan Stringham qualifies her sense of the formidable ‘world’ represented by Mrs Lowder by telling herself that ‘it would surely have sunk the stoutest Cunarder’ (WOD, I, p.188). As late as 1909, Howells reported that ‘the Cunarder continues an ark of safety for the timid and despairing’, referring to ‘the old Cunard rule against a passenger’s being carried overboard’ (Howells, *Seven English Cities*, p.11).

¹²² ‘Launch of the *Scotia*’, p.4.

¹²³ Ribbat rightly emphasizes the significance of speed, both as an ‘issue’ in contemporary discourse about ocean liners, and as ‘acquir[ing] a central symbolic function’ in the tale. However, his assertion that, ‘[l]ike the late-nineteenth-century critics of the ocean liner companies, “The Patagonia” associates arrogance with speed and moral integrity with slowness’ is problematic, since morally suspect characters, including the narrator, enjoy or take advantage of the ship’s slower progress (Ribbat, ‘Attracted by a Dusky Object’, p.4).

increasingly important to tabulate, witness, or otherwise measure one's experience.¹²⁴ In James's epistolary tale, 'The Point of View', Aurora Church reports: 'Twelve times round the deck make a mile, [...] and by this measurement I have been walking twenty miles a day.'¹²⁵ During his passage on the *Carmania*, boasting that '[w]e displace thirty thousand tons of water', and 'can carry 521 first and second class passengers, a crew of 463, and 2260 emigrants below', H. G. Wells worked out that 'you need walk the main-deck from end to end and back only four times to do a mile'.¹²⁶

At the same time, guidebooks advised against the exertion of attempting to quantify one's voyage experience. Morford's *Short-Trip Guide to America* (1874), expounding on 'What to do and Avoid on Shipboard', urges the anxious passenger 'to avoid making up the mind as to any positive time at which the voyage must be concluded', pointing out that '[t]o look across the three thousand miles of the Atlantic, and think over the days necessary to travel it, even on the swiftest vessel, is rather discouraging [...] to people of rapid thought and active habit'. It is only 'by [...] avoiding any definite calculation', that 'the amount of impatience may be very considerably reduced'.¹²⁷

This advice is scarcely heeded by the passengers of the *Patagonia*, who in various ways endeavour to 'count'—and re-count—their journey. It is with a sense of contractual entitlement that Jasper Nettlepoint declares: 'We shall be in about six in the evening, on the eleventh day—they promise it' (p.776). The unfortunate Grace Mavis, who wishes the voyage could go on 'for ever and ever' (p.771) nevertheless 'counts every hour' (p.775). And meanwhile a bored faction of other passengers unkindly keep themselves busy 'recounting' the long 'years' of her engagement (p.770). For the narrator, however, Grace also 'counts' in another sense, as the most conspicuous passenger on board.

¹²⁴ Ship time was 'divided into watches of 4 hours each, commencing at 12, 4, 8. The time of each watch is divided into 8 bells, and is struck every half hour; thus 2, 3, or 7 bells signify the 2c, 3d, or 7th half hour of the watch' (Loomis, *The Index Guide to Travel*, p. xvii).

¹²⁵ 'The Point of View', *Century Magazine*, 25 (December 1882), 248-69, p.223.

¹²⁶ Wells, *The Future of America* (New York: Harper, 1906), p.28.

¹²⁷ Henry Morford, *Morford's Short-Trip Guide to America* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1874), p.30.

I became conscious [...] that Grace Mavis would for the rest of the voyage be the most *visible* thing in one's range, the figure that would count most in the composition of groups. She couldn't help it, poor girl; nature had made her conspicuous—important, as the painters say. She paid for it by the exposure it brought with it, the danger that people would [...] enter into her affairs. (p.771)

The opportunities ocean travel afforded for people-watching were frequently remarked upon. Recounting his experience on the *Scotia*, one correspondent observed that '[t]he passengers who are grouped together in temporary intercourse on a voyage are always an interesting study'.¹²⁸ Morford's *Guide*, cautioning that reading on board occasioned seasickness, added that 'it is a poor passage-list in which more amusement cannot be found than in books, for the [...] period consumed in crossing the Atlantic'.¹²⁹ And as late as 1927, in a chapter entitled 'Who's Who on the Atlantic', Basil Woon described looking at the 'passenger list' as being 'as good a game as any other'. Woon notes the potential of the ocean voyage for mingling with distinguished people, the Atlantic being 'rich in personalities'. Moreover, he points out, 'one has [...] the satisfying experience of being able to study them at one's leisure. They can't get off'.¹³⁰

Rennella has drawn attention to the social, creative, and intellectual possibilities of transatlantic travel, particularly amongst the Bostonian intellectual elite of James's acquaintance. Yet notwithstanding the numerous and stimulating exchanges between Charles Eliot Norton and Ralph Waldo Emerson on the *Olympus* in 1873, between Howells and Melancthon M. Hurd (of Hurd & Houghton) on the *Asia* in 1865, or between Kipling and Henry Adams on the *Teutonic* in 1892 (a meeting engineered by James himself), there remained the fact that a ship's company was itself a static and unchanging entity.¹³¹ The prospect of sociability at sea, which Woon good-humouredly construes as a means of

¹²⁸ 'On Board the *Scotia*', *Liverpool Mercury*, 18 May 1868, p.6.

¹²⁹ Morford's *Short-Trip Guide to America*, p.34.

¹³⁰ Basil Woon, *The Frantic Atlantic: An Intimate Guide to the Well-Known Deep* (New York: Knopf, 1927), p.32, pp.69-70.

¹³¹ Rennella, *The Boston Cosmopolitans*, p.27.

cornering or observing celebrities, was, as Foulke observes, countered by the ‘absolute isolation of the ship’, which made ‘adapting to the fixed society on board unavoidable’.¹³²

While the threat of stilled waters (the ominous, windless calm of *The Ancient Mariner*) was a spectre largely quashed by the age of steam, the ship’s ‘absolute isolation’ and ‘fixed society’ remained sources of ennui and a habitual refrain of voyagers’ accounts even late in the century. Stevenson’s account of his journey on an emigrant ship from Scotland to New York reports how, on departure, ‘[t]he company [...] began to draw together, by inscrutable magnetisms, upon the decks [...] all now belonging for ten days to one small iron country on the deep’.¹³³ William Hamilton’s *A Transatlantic Voyage* (1890) similarly describes the disconcerting realization that ‘[t]he same company was to form a large family circle, or a small colony of pilgrims, on board ship for at least ten days without any change—no one leaving, and no stranger joining us in our limited sphere during the voyage.’ As a result, ‘[t]he slightest incident on board-ship creates interest among the passengers’.¹³⁴

‘The Patagonia’ examines the ominous potential of such an environment. An ‘inveterate, almost a professional observer’, the narrator is a recognizable species of Jamesian reporter, yet the voyage lends his habit a particular alacrity, as he confesses to Mrs Nettlepoint, ‘At sea in general I’m awful—I exceed the limits’ (p.715). Her unwillingness to leave her cabin to study fellow passengers only galvanizes her companion who declares: ‘I [...] shall come down very often and tell you about them. You’re not interested today, but you will be tomorrow, for a ship’s a great school of gossip. You won’t believe the number of researches and problems you will be engaged in by the middle of the voyage’ (p.715).

The narrator’s neutral interest in ‘researches and problems’ euphemises a tendency among bored travellers towards gossip and sniping. Approaching the end of his ten-day crossing on the *Algeria* with his sister Alice and their Aunt Kate, James witnessed this inclination first-hand, reporting ‘[a] mean lot of passengers, giving discouraging views of

¹³² Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, p.8.

¹³³ Stevenson, *The Amateur Emigrant: From the Clyde to Sandy Hook* (Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1895), p.19.

¹³⁴ William Hamilton, *A Transatlantic Voyage; or, Twelve Days on the Ocean* (London: Digby and Long, 1890), p.37.

human nature'.¹³⁵ Captain Charles Chapman's memoir, *The Ocean Waves* (1875), treats such tendencies for grouping and self-scrutiny as inevitable, citing the 'little communities [that] are [...] formed the first day or two after the ship leaves port, or perhaps the right name for them would be cliques, or small tribes, some of them being kind, and some of them just a little, more or less, unkind'.¹³⁶ On the *Patagonia*, one such 'clique' is headed by Mrs. Peck, an old neighbour of Grace's who loudly denounces both the girl's long engagement and her habit of promenading on deck accompanied by Jasper.

The precariousness of Grace's reputation seem to have had some basis in fact, for while both Hamilton and Chapman enjoy the relaxed license for communication between the sexes at sea, guidebooks for women emphasized the threat posed to the unwary female passenger. Mary Cadwalader Jones, writing in 1900 for the benefit of the 'increasing number of [American] women [who] travel in Europe', strikes a cautionary note regarding 'crossing the ocean,' which, she argues, 'differs from an ordinary journey'.

It is a disagreeable fact that some American girls contrive to put themselves at a disadvantage from the time they leave their own country. A ship's company is a little world with all sorts and conditions of men and women in it, and not all of them always unobjectionable. As you are shut up together for some days, it is usually impossible, [...] to keep entirely aloof from other passengers [...] but that is no reason why such acquaintanceship should grow faster than it would under normal circumstances on shore.¹³⁷

While the presumptuous speed of ocean liners carried its own sense of popular hubris, the celerity with which romantic attachments developed at sea was likewise considered an inevitable matter for moral caution (in 'The Journey to Panama' it even assumes the status of

¹³⁵ To HJ Sr. and Mary Walsh James, 20 May 1872, *CL 1855-72*, I, p.3.

¹³⁶ Charles Chapman, *The Ocean Waves: Travels by Land and Sea* (London: Berridge, 1875), p.88.

¹³⁷ Mary Cadwalader Jones, *European Travel for Women: Notes and Suggestions* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), p.vii.

‘a recognised nautical rule’ (p.197)). The analogy is made in ‘The Great Condition’, where Braddle, subject to the particular ‘conditions’ of an ocean voyage, begins ‘a friendship of which the leaps and bounds were, in the social, the sentimental sphere, not less remarkable than those with which the great hurrying ship took its way through the sea’.¹³⁸ The speedy progress of such friendships is also alluded to in *The Reverberator* (1888), when the American journalist George Flack calls upon the Dosson sisters at their hotel in Paris having accompanied them on a previous crossing to Europe. Flack, who hopes to marry the younger sister, Francie, remarks that ‘She knows my pace’, to which Delia, ‘with memories of the *Umbria*’, replies: ‘I should think she would, the way you raced!’, adding that ‘I hope you don’t expect to rush round Paris that way’.¹³⁹ The narrator of ‘The Patagonia’ shows an awareness of the precipitate growth of such attachments, sternly reminding Jasper, who scoffs at the possibility of Grace falling in love with him in so brief a time, that ‘six days at sea are equivalent to sixty on land’ (p.768).

In Howells’s *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879), Lydia Blood’s status as a lone female passenger makes her conspicuous and prone to male attention, with the result that she becomes the object of officious protection: ‘[S]he was [...] picturesquely [...] the centre about which the ship’s pride and chivalrous sentiment revolved’. As ‘the wonted incidents of a sea voyage lent their variety to the life on board’ (whale-spotting, flying fish, croquet and musical concerts), it is to Lydia that they seem to refer: ‘All these things were turned to account for the young girl’s amusement, as if they had happened for her’.¹⁴⁰

In ‘The Patagonia’, Grace likewise elicits a narrativising, though negative response from her fellow passengers. The narrator imagines her the adulterous heroine of a French novel: ‘Every revolution of our engine [...] would contribute to the effect of making her one’ (p.769). Both ostracised by the rest of the ship’s company, and the spectacular centre around which its interest ‘revolves’, Grace not only counts, but is held to account. Indeed, her judgment by her

¹³⁸ ‘The Great Condition’, p.10.

¹³⁹ *The Reverberator* (London: Macmillan, 1888), p.5. The narrator charitably observes of Francie that ‘There was nothing in her to confirm the implication that she had rushed about the deck of a Cunarder with a newspaper-man’ (p.16).

¹⁴⁰ Howells, *The Lady of the Aroostook* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1879), p.94.

fellow passengers for a romantic transgression resembles a favourite form of shipboard distraction: the staging of ‘mock trials’ (fig. 9).¹⁴¹

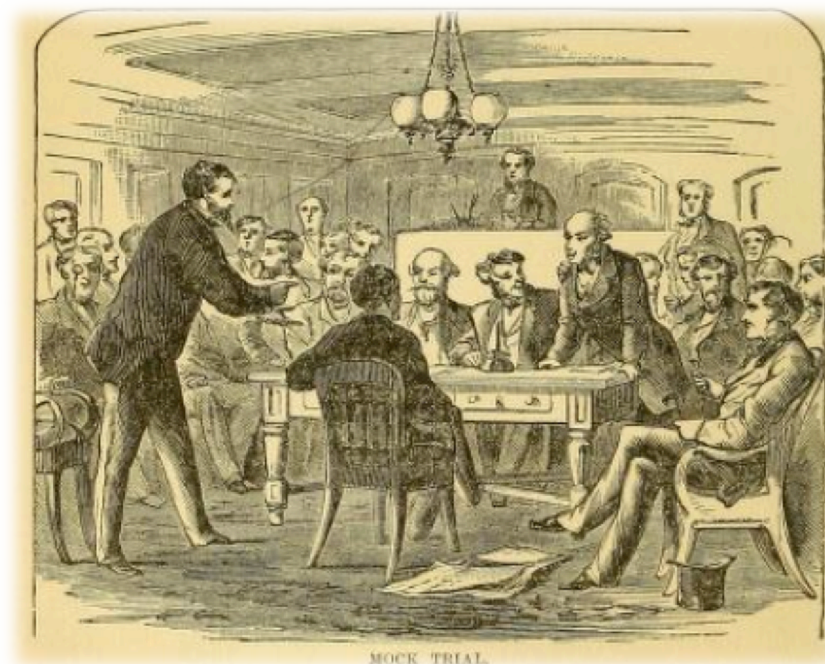


Figure 9: ‘A Mock Trial’

A common theme of these ‘sham trials’ was the so-called ‘breach of promise case’. Flirtations observed upon deck were comically exaggerated, and witnesses were required to testify to the development of an attachment during the voyage, which the male party had typically failed to honour with an engagement. ‘In this way’, Chapman relates, ‘the monotony of the voyage was lessened, and the days went quickly past’.¹⁴² Hamilton devotes an entire chapter to one such case, the alleged grievance of a Miss Rose Adelia Clinker who, like James’s heroine, is ‘a young lady of American extraction’ from ‘the classical city of Boston’, and whose injury is ‘discovered to the passengers [of the *SS Circassia*] by various little incidents that took place on board’.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ The custom is mentioned by Mark Twain: ‘We also had a mock trial. No ship ever went to sea that hadn’t a mock trial on board’ (*The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims’ Progress* (Hartford, Conn: Bancroft, 1869), p.43).

¹⁴² Chapman, *The Ocean Waves*, p.100.

¹⁴³ Hamilton, *Transatlantic Voyage*, p.81, p.83.

The mock trial was typical of shipboard diversions in its aggrandisement of such trivial, or ‘little incidents’, deriving its humorous satisfaction precisely from its ironic removal from jurisdiction. In the same way, Mrs. Peck’s exclamation at Grace and Jasper’s carrying-on: ‘Why it’s right there—straight in front of you, like a play at the theatre—as if you had paid to see it!’ conveys at once outrage and a complacent entitlement (p.773). Conflating the courtroom and the theatre, the mock-trial made much ado about nothing. Despite his periodic anxiety over Grace’s welfare, the narrator is equally prone to such lapses in judgment. A typically erratic ocean passenger, he is forensically observant one day and comatose the next, dozing with his novel in his deckchair, or, like Mrs Peck, idly imagining life on deck to be a play put on for his amusement.

The *Patagonia* was slow, but she was spacious and comfortable, and there was a motherly decency in her long nursing rock and her rustling old-fashioned gait [...] We were not numerous enough to squeeze each other and yet we were not too few to entertain—with that familiarity and relief which figures and objects acquire on the great bare field of the ocean and under the great bright glass of the sky. [...] [T]he clean stage of the deck shows you a play that amuses, the personal drama of the voyage, the movement and interaction, in the strong sea-light, of figures that end by representing something . . . (p.769)

For the narrator, the ‘strong sea light’ seems variously to expose characters—to have ‘a simplifying, certifying effect’—and to dazzle him.¹⁴⁴ Watching Jasper, the narrator declares that ‘I [...] saw him, thanks to the intense sea-light, inside and out, in his personal, his moral totality’ (p.775). Here, however, his attempts to weigh up those around him—not ‘numerous enough’ and yet not ‘too few’—produces a computation of ‘figures’ at once vivid and vague,

¹⁴⁴ Grace herself is both ‘most visible’ and obscure; presented throughout as wearing a ‘veil’. This was also a conventional item of sea-attire: ‘To protect the face from the effect of the sun and salt air [...] a thick, dark veil will be found very desirable’ (Loomis, *The Index Guide to Travel*, p.xvi).

as, trapping Grace and Jasper ‘under [a] great bright [magnifying] ‘glass’, he tails off with the supposition that they must ‘end by representing *something*’.

As the pair pass before him, the narrator’s thoughts dwell persistently upon ideas of watching and safety. With his faith in the ship’s ‘motherly decency’ (a description of maternal supervision that feels ironic, given that Grace’s chaperone remains below-deck), the word ‘relief’ takes on a double valence, indicating a feeling of assurance as well as the sharpness of contrast. This sense of a ‘relief’ from duty is reinforced by a later discussion in the saloon, where Mrs Peck and the narrator sit playing whist. Mrs Peck’s vitriolic remarks concerning Grace and Jasper staying out late on deck, elicit the joke from another of the players that ‘[...] They don’t want relief—like the ship’s watch!’ (p.773) The narrator’s solution to his anxiety is to pepper his assertions with negatives, issuing a series of disclaimers which pre-emptively seek to undermine the possibility of serious harm.

One had never thought of the sea as the great place of safety, but now it came over one that there’s no place so safe from the land. When it does not give you trouble it takes it away—takes away [...] telegrams and newspapers and [...] duties and efforts, all the complications [...] that we have stuffed into our terrene life. (p.769)

The narrator’s use of the word ‘great’ in conjunction with descriptions of absence—of ‘bare’ horizons and evacuations, things ‘tak[en] away’— suggests the perennial difficulty of establishing proportion at sea. He refers this difficulty to the question of how gossip might be weighed, reassuring himself that, here at least, words have nowhere to go: ‘The whisper that carries them is very small, in the great scale of things [...] but it’s also very safe, for there’s no compression, no sounding-board, to make speakers responsible’ (p.770).

The acoustical properties of a ‘sounding-board’ (the ability to retain or project the ‘speaker’s’ narrative) are surely referenced here; but the phrase also recalls a measuring device used at sea: ‘to ascertain the depth of water’ on approaching land towards the end of a voyage (*OED*). Until arrival, the narrator implies, words and water are equally unfathomable,

and as ‘The Patagonia’ draws to a close and the *Patagonia* nears her destination, he increasingly cedes responsibility for both ship and story: ‘It will doubtless appear to the critical reader that I had already devoted far too much [attention] to the little episode of which my story gives an account, but to that I can only reply that the event justified me’ (p.780).

Yet ‘the event’, as the narrator cryptically anticipates it, is not among those of which his ‘story’ *does* ‘give an account’. When the ‘most visible’ passenger on the ship—the one who ‘count[s] the most’—disappears, it is in the middle of the night, and the rest have gone to bed. Even the ship’s watch cannot recall hearing a splash or seeing a figure make its way onto the deck.

[T]hey had hunted everywhere. A ship’s a big place, but you do come to the end of it, and if a person ain’t there why they ain’t. In short an hour had passed and the young lady was not accounted for; from which I might judge if she ever would be. The watch couldn’t account for her, but no doubt the fishes in the sea could—poor unfortunate lady! [...] The captain didn’t like it—they never did, but he’d try to keep it quiet—they always did. (p.782)

A story that is ‘never’ liked and therefore ‘always’ kept ‘quiet’, which has both never and always taken place, ‘The Patagonia’ represents a simultaneity of absence and presence. In revising the tale for the New York Edition, James would make this equivalence more ironic and explicit, as the steward’s rueful discovery of a missing passenger is restated as a positive event: ‘If a person wasn’t there, *why there it was*’.¹⁴⁵

‘What is Missing’

This chapter has attempted to trace a congruence between a positive worrying of absence that characterises accounts of the voyage experience in the nineteenth century, and a

¹⁴⁵ ‘The Patagonia’, in ‘*Daisy Miller*’, ‘*Pandora*’, ‘*The Patagonia*’, and *Other Tales* (New York: Scribner’s, 1909), pp.169-254, p.251 (my emphasis).

Jamesian habit of significant omission. That James's 'zeros' are not infrequently 'emphatic' has often been remarked by his critics and is not, of course, limited to his writings about the ocean, though it is worth noting how often discussions under its rubric intersect with the sea or voyaging in some way. Christopher Knight, who takes James's investment in 'omissions' as inaugurating a much wider trend in modernist writing, focuses upon 'The Middle Years' (1893) as an exemplary text: a story set at Bournemouth and replete with descriptions of the ocean and sea-imagery. In his analysis of the tale's theme of 'unwritten manifestation', (the struggle of the ailing writer, Dencombe, to complete his novel), Knight singles out the latter's rueful estimation that 'The pearl is the unwritten—the pearl is the unalloyed, the *rest*, the lost!' ¹⁴⁶ Tim Lustig considers the 'notion of an absent core' in relation to 'The Turn of the Screw' (1898), a novella 'deeply preoccupied with gaps and voids', and one whose 'values', as James recorded in the Preface, 'are positively all blanks' (*LCFW*, p.1188). While none of the characters cross the ocean, Lustig's discussion of how the governess 'engages in a sort of inferential conjuring in which absence becomes a form of presence', dwells upon the episode where Flora eludes the governess to go to the lake (which in their games they dub 'The Sea of Azof'). The vanished boat is an absence which, as Lustig remarks, the governess converts into firm 'testimony': "“Not seeing” the boat in its usual mooring-place is “the strongest of proofs” that Flora has taken it to cross the lake'. ¹⁴⁷

Transatlantic maritime history constitutes its own ghostly presence throughout James's fiction and travel writing, where retired sailors and disused sea-ports recur. ¹⁴⁸ In 'Old Suffolk' (1897), James displays an interest in the ocean's own capacity to recuperate absence

¹⁴⁶ Christopher Knight, *Omissions are not Accidents: Modern Aphophticism from Henry James to Jacques Derrida* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2010), p.21.

¹⁴⁷ Tim Lustig, *Henry James and the Ghostly* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.116, p.115, p.170.

¹⁴⁸ In *Roderick Hudson*, Rowland Mallet is introduced as the grandson of 'a retired sea-captain, once famous on the ships that sailed from Salem and Newburyport' (p.8). In *The Bostonians*, Basil Ransom visits the seaside town of Marmion, inhabited by a 'nest' of 'retired shipmasters; [...] two or three of whom might be seen lingering in their dim doorways as if they [...] remembered the nights in far-away waters when they would not have thought of turning in at all' (p.352). James encounters another such 'harbour-side vacancy' at Salem in *The American Scene*, where he is impressed by 'the sense of dead marine industries, that [...] looked out at me [...] over a grass-grown interval, from the blank windows of the old Customs House' (p.266). See also James's description of Salem in *Hawthorne*: 'Salem is a sea-port, but it is a sea-port deserted and decayed' (*Hawthorne* (London: Macmillan, 1879), p.15).

as a positive value, describing how the erosion of the shoreline lends it ‘a sort of mystery, that more than makes up for what it may have surrendered’. It is ‘this very visibility of [...] mutilation’, James insists, which marks ‘the source of the distinction’, and he takes a kind of pleasure in tallying up its absence as a felt quantity: ‘There is a presence in what is missing—there is history in there being so little. It is so little, to-day, that every item of the handful counts’. ¹⁴⁹

Drawing attention to James’s valuation of ruins or ‘obliterated history’ in his travel writing, Tony Tanner cites the author’s rumination on the Dunwich coast as one of two examples involving the sea. James would evince the same tendency to ‘count’ ‘what is missing’ in another late essay, ‘The Saint’s Afternoon’ (1901); indulging in a comically apocalyptic daydream of German and American tourists being swallowed up by the tide at Capri. The tourists are lowered into ‘little tubs’ for their excursion into the Blue Grotto, with James left a ‘recalcitrant observer on the deserted deck [...] aware of how delightful it might be if none of them should come out again’. The ‘fascination of the idea’, James admits, ‘is not a little [...] in the fact that, as the wave rises over the aperture, there is the most encouraging appearance that they perfectly may not. There it is. There is no more of them’. ¹⁵⁰ This last phrase, which Tanner relates to the ‘massively [...] depopulated’ environments of James’s travelogues in general, finds its echo in James’s later edition of ‘The Patagonia’: ‘If a person wasn’t there why there it was’. ¹⁵¹ As I have argued, such equations of absence with presence, typical of James’s preoccupation with ‘omissions, and ignorings, and avoidances’, find their particular analogy in accounts of the transatlantic crossing. ¹⁵²

The next chapter considers further this relationship between transport and testimony. In *The Golden Bowl* a series of ‘vocifer[ous] vehicles’ (p.275) repeatedly invoke the courtroom and the trial, while the transatlantic voyage hovers on the periphery as penalty: the means by which one is ‘removed, transported, doomed’ (p.480).

¹⁴⁹ ‘Old Suffolk’, *Harper’s Weekly*, 41 (25 September 1897), p.946.

¹⁵⁰ ‘The Saint’s Afternoon’, in *The May Book*, comp. by Eliza Davis Aria (London: Macmillan, 1901), pp.1-11, p.2.

¹⁵¹ Tanner, *Henry James and the Art of Nonfiction* (Athens: Georgia University Press, 1995), p.7.

¹⁵² Tanner, *Art of Non-Fiction*, p.17.

- 2 -

‘A Rotary Motion’:

Cabs and Carriages in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904)

His manner of speech is very amusing and strongly indicative of the studious finish of his writings. He will say—‘Hm-m—I walked—eh—I walked to the—hm-m—the eh—hm-m-m—the what shall I say?—the corner! and took a—hm-m-m—a—I suppose I may call it—hm-m—a hansom—a hansom-cab!’¹

In his *Notebooks*, James expresses his original conception for *The Golden Bowl* (1904) in terms of circular movement: ‘The whole situation works in a kind of inevitable rotary way—in what would be called a vicious circle’. This ‘rotary *motion*’, James goes on to explain, ‘consists in the reasons which each of the parties give the other’, describing alike the novel’s formal logic and its characters’ pursuit of – or defence against – the knowledge of adultery (*CN* p.74, my emphasis). A similar motion describes the sparring couples of *What Maisie Knew* (1897), another family drama whose protagonists make up ‘a vicious circle’, and whose heroine is always ‘in rotation’.²

It is through such ‘rotary motion[s]’, I will suggest, that the numerous cab and carriage journeys in these novels dramatize formal and epistemological predicaments. For both family groups, the private carriage and its fastidious circuits reinforce structures of belonging and exclusion. Meanwhile the ceaseless question, for each group of Londoners, of whether to ‘extend the [family] circle’ (*GB* p.91), suggestively employs the urban cab-ride, whose own contested limits, or ‘radius’, prescribed an imagined threat to social purity.

These uses for the cab or carriage can be more fully explored and explained by first considering the ‘vicious’ nature of the ‘situation’ James recruits them to address in *The Golden Bowl*, and their employment as organizing and spatial metaphors. Both the formal and

¹ The excerpt is from the diary of George Washington Cable, who had tea with James, and thus humorously recorded the encounter (qtd. by Arlin Turner, in *George W. Cable: A Biography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1956), p.309).

² This reference to ‘rotation’ appears both in the 1897 edition of the novel (*WMK* p.2), and in the Preface to the New York edition (*LCFW* p.1156).

communicative value of these metaphoric ‘vehicles’ is enhanced by attending to their literal function within the novel as modes of transport.

The first half of the chapter examines how the cab or carriage instigates James’s own disciplinary restriction of aesthetic ‘relations’, outlined in his Preface to *Roderick Hudson*. James conflates both senses of ‘relation’ (as familiar connection and formal attitude) in using these vehicles to measure physical and social positioning. As I will argue, James acknowledges London itself to be both physically and socially comprehended by ‘circles’, and through the city’s own transport systems construes this understanding as a matter of specific, costly and – crucially – *relational* knowledge.

The second half of the chapter discusses ways in which the cab or carriage communicates the knowledge *of* relations. I begin with Maisie’s own introduction to the pedagogical function of vehicles, which provide both spectacles of, and superior perspectives upon, the seedier side of adult life, as well as a lexicon for distinguishing between the social and familial positions occupied by her guardians. The chapter concludes with the equally seedy adults of *The Golden Bowl*, who employ the cab’s extensive grasp upon both geographical and sexual ‘relations’ – enlisted by the novel and divorce-court – to interrogate each other as to their knowledge of adultery.

‘vicious circles’

At the beginning of *The Golden Bowl*, the exclusive relationship enjoyed by Adam Verver and his daughter Maggie is altered by her marriage to Prince Amerigo. To correct this imbalance, Adam marries Charlotte Stant, a school-friend of Maggie’s and, unbeknownst to the Ververs, erstwhile lover of the Prince. As Maggie and her father continue to prefer each other’s company, the Prince and Charlotte resume their affair. The second half of the novel registers Maggie’s dawning suspicions regarding the composition of her family group, whose dubious equilibrium takes on the image of a carriage:

[I]t had been, for all the world, as if Charlotte had been ‘had in’, as the servants always said of extra help, because they had thus suffered it to be pointed out to them that if their family coach lumbered and stuck the fault was in its lacking its complement of wheels. Having but three, as they might say, it had wanted another, and what had Charlotte done from the first but begin to act, on the spot, and ever so smoothly and beautifully, as a fourth? (*GB* p.303)

Critical interest in the conveyances of *The Golden Bowl* has focussed upon Maggie’s conceit of the ‘family coach’, and still more upon the vivid frontispiece to the novel in the second volume of the New York Edition, which shows the departing back of a hansom cab as it plies for hire along a frosty London avenue (*fig.10*). In his analysis of the cab, Ralph Bogardus finds a solution to the difficulty posed by the carriage; a ‘problem ultimately dealt with when [Maggie’s] father decides to leave England, taking Charlotte with him’.

A two-wheeled coach is pictured from behind as it is leaving Portland Place. We immediately understand that the family cannot remain as a single four-wheeled coach; it must divide itself and ride in separate two-wheeled coaches, each going its separate way, each wheel carrying its share of the burden.³

If Maggie’s figurative carriage demonstrates her initial ‘problem’ by way of an alarming symmetry, then, the cab of the frontispiece offers its own formal solution, emphasizing the necessity of distinct conjugal pairings.⁴

³ Ralph F. Bogardus, *Pictures and Texts: Henry James, A.L. Coburn, and New Ways of Seeing in Literary Culture* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), p.197, p.218.

⁴ Others have been less inclined to view the image as one of resolution. For John Kimmey, the sense of an ending is a shade more dubious, the photograph conveying at once the ‘strangeness and emptiness’ of the city, and ‘the moral, social, and psychological climate at this significant point in the novel with everything resolved but nobody particularly happy about the solution’ (Kimmey, *Henry James and London*, pp.170-71). Philip Horne attributes a more fertile ambiguity, connecting the ‘misty winter twilight’ which ‘leads the eye through layers of gr[e]y into a white infinity’ with Amerigo’s imagined approach (while also in a hansom) to Poe’s mysterious ‘white wall of fog’ (Horne, ‘Revisitings and Revisions in the New York Edition of the Novels and Tales of Henry James’, in *A Companion to Henry James*, ed. by Greg Zacharias (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp.208-30, p.218).



Figure 10: 'Portland Place'

To read such vehicles this way makes sense in terms of James's own rigorous attention to formal discipline, and is supported by their use both within and without the novel. Philip Horne points out that 'the two-wheeler, two-person hansom cab' of the photograph provides 'the intimate space of two-seater carriages and the *tête-à-têtes* of which so much of the novel consists'.⁵ As John Stokes has shown, the 'limited amount of space available within' the cab made it instrumental, in literature, for dramatizing 'issues of inclusion and exclusion'.⁶ And in his survey of Victorian cabs and carriages (1902), Sir Walter Gilbey adds (of the hansom) that 'there is no vehicle that runs more easily, particularly when the load is truly balanced'.⁷ It is this combination of balance and exclusion that Maggie herself most notices when, observing the system responsible for putting her coach in motion – 'watching it

⁵ Horne, 'Revisitings and Revisions', p.219.

⁶ John Stokes, ' "Encapsulation": Horse-Drawn Journeys in Late-Victorian Literature', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 15 (2010), 239-53, p.246.

⁷ Walter Gilbey, *Modern Carriages* (London: Vinton, 1905), p.112.

pass' – she realizes that her husband and Charlotte 'were pulling it while she and her father were not so much as pushing. They were seated inside together' (*GB* p.304). In his Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, James himself uses carriage-wheels to describe the (necessary, authorial) exclusions of certain characters:

Each of these persons is but wheels to the coach; neither belongs to the body of that vehicle, or is for a moment accommodated with a seat inside. There the subject alone is ensconced, in the form of its 'hero and heroine', and of the privileged high officials, say, who ride with the king and queen. (*LCFW* p.1082)

Such figurations, however, which communicate not only the fact of exclusion but the systems of motion or traction that make exclusion possible, also point to the limitation of reading the cab or carriage as a wholly spatial or metaphoric idea; namely that these readings do not differentiate actual vehicles from other static 'vehicles' (pictorial, architectural) through which late Jamesian interpolations of knowledge and form are read.⁸ What they cannot take into account is the specificity of the cab or carriage itself, beyond its spatial capacity (in Bogardus's analysis they are both 'coaches'), nor its function as a mode of transport. To quibble that Charlotte and Mr Verver could never fit their luggage into a hansom, or that they pay their last visit to the Prince and Maggie 'in state' (a carriage) (*GB* p.528), would surely miss the point of Bogardus's reading, as well as the sense in which, in his Preface to the novel, James recalls he invited Portland Place to 'generalise itself' (*LCFW* p.1329). But the distinct valence that types of vehicle have in James's fiction also qualifies their use as formal devices. While, for instance, the coach's progress represents for Maggie an

⁸ John Carlos Rowe has emphasized the organizing function of 'the cab of James's [...] Prefaces to the New York Edition, the cab of literary form', as a structural conceit on a par with the famous architectural figure of the Prefaces: 'As in the "house of fiction," the artist in his cab experiences the external world from the limited perspective of the windows pierced in this formal space' (Rowe, *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p.183, p.239). Phyllis Van Slyck treats Maggie's image of the family coach as an example of the novel's generation of meaning through 'portraiture' and stasis: 'Each time the action is momentarily suspended and one character places another within an enclosing frame' (Van Slyck, ' "An innate preference for the represented subject": Portraiture and Knowledge in *The Golden Bowl*', *HJR*, 15 (1994), 179-89, p.179).

exclusion of family members that is all too effective, for Maisie Farange, ‘thrust into a hansom’ by her estranged father, the cab suggests the unexpected admission of certain relations:

They drove and drove, and he kept her close; she stared straight before her, holding her breath, watching one dark street succeed another and strangely conscious that what it all meant was somehow that papa was less to be left out of everything than she had supposed. (*WMK* p.146)

It is in motion that these vehicles most minister to James’s complex preoccupation with relationality. The author’s foregrounding of the ‘whole [narrative] situation’ for *The Golden Bowl* as both circular and ‘vicious’ suggests his famous mapping of ‘relations’ in his Preface to *Roderick Hudson*: ‘Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so’ (*LCFW* p.1041).⁹ Both *Maisie* and the *Bowl* pay recurrent heed to this geometry. The ‘circles’ that describe the movement and arrangement of persons in the later novel— whether ‘elated’ (*GB* p.152), ‘domestic’ (*GB* p.150), ‘vicious’ (*GB* p.280), or ‘highest’ (*GB* p.284)—are invariably accompanied by anxieties over whether these might be ‘tightened’ (*GB* p.221), ‘merged’ (*GB* p.152), or ‘drawn too wide’ (*GB* p.105). It is the question of whether ‘to extend the[ir] actual circle’ (*GB* p.91) that originally preoccupies Maggie and her father, prompting them to enlist Charlotte as the fourth ‘wheel’. In *Maisie*, ‘the circle of the Faranges’ (p.2) likewise extends to admit new spouses and step-parents – Sir Claude and Mrs Beale – whose own relationship will in turn make up a ‘vicious circle’ (p.280).

⁹ The qualification of the family circle in both novels as ‘vicious’ suggests its ‘relations’ are at once (geometrically) ineluctable and (socially/sexually) immoral. Both senses of ‘vicious’ are thus brought out by Sir Claude: ‘It’s the same old vicious circle — and when I say vicious I don’t mean a pun or a what-d’-ye-call-’em’ (*WMK* p.280).

As, in his *Notebooks*, James makes such circles synonymous with ‘motion’, so the familial structures in these novels are regularly asserted through transport. In *The Golden Bowl*, the carriage journey’s social significance is also formal, facilitating ‘distinctly rum’ familial ‘arrangements’ (*GB* p.266). The word ‘arrangement’ is often associated with travel, for, as Charlotte points out, it is ‘[t]he fact of our distinct establishments’ which prompts her stepdaughter to be ‘always arranging’ to meet her father, ‘which she didn’t have to do while they lived together’ (*GB* p.181). For Maggie, such arrangements almost invariably involve drives between the house she shares with her husband at Portland Place, and the home she formerly occupied with her father at Eaton Square, despite Mr Verver’s wry observation that she has not “‘moved” very far’ (*GB* p.121). Following her parents’ divorce, Maisie is likewise confronted with a new ‘arrangement’, one which will make her subject to ‘periodical uprootings’ and ‘alternations of residence’ (*WMK* p.11).¹⁰

The constant ritual of visit-paying in *The Golden Bowl* invokes James’s ‘rotary motion’ through chiasmic or circular descriptions, such as the narrator’s observation that Adam Verver’s ‘visit to his grandson held its place, in his day, against all interventions, and this without counting his grandson’s visits to *him*, scarcely less ordered and timed’ (*GB* p.109), or Charlotte’s remark that Maggie and her father are ‘like children playing at paying visits’ (‘with “I’ll come to you to-morrow”, and, “No, I’ll come to *you*”’) (*GB* p.177). ‘Rounds’ of visits likewise preoccupy the protagonists of *What Maisie Knew*, whose movements are, according to court ruling, necessarily systematic.¹¹ Like the cabs she rides in, attached to stands all over the city, or the carriages hired for the season, Maisie is to be ‘taken in rotation’ (*WMK* p.2).

These journeys contribute to notions of relations that are included or excluded the sense of relation as an attitude, allowing James to elide distinctions between the word’s familial and formal senses. It is a carriage that initially puts Maggie and the Prince ‘in

¹⁰ ‘The “arrangement”, as her periodical uprootings were called’ (*WMK* p.23).

¹¹ In the New York edition of the novel, these ‘rounds’ of visits become more hectic and pronounced, as characters ‘cling together as in some wild game of “going round”’ (*What Maisie Knew* (New York: Scribner’s, 1908), p.334).

relation', as Fanny Assingham remembers, in Rome (*GB* p.55). In *Maisie*, the numerous cabs, as much as the child herself, shuttled between households, are responsible for having 'brought [her step-parents] together' (p.54). And even the fact of little Clara Matilda – another battered and thwarted child of the metropolis – being dispatched 'by the cruellest of hansoms' is information which, for Maisie, sets her vividly within 'the family group'; and makes her, suddenly and unaccountably, '[her] little dead sister' (*WMK* p.20).

It is not only through such extended conceits as Maggie's coach (Maggie's pagoda is another example) that the positions of people relative to one another are defined and communicated; they are also described – in the geometrical as well as narrative sense – by journeys *between* destinations; visits that reinforce and perform spot checks upon each other's whereabouts. As Adrian Poole observes, 'Maisie's progress depends on learning how much distance to put between herself and others'.¹² Thus her most 'mature' realisation, in a hansom with Sir Claude outside her father's house, 'consisted of an odd unexpected shame at placing in an inferior light, to so perfect a gentleman [...] as Sir Claude, so very near a relative as Mr. Farange' (*WMK* p.99). During a drive home with the Prince, of an evening, from Eaton Square, Maggie is troubled by her conception of Amerigo and Charlotte's 'attitude' towards her and her father: 'Her inner vision fixed it once more, this attitude, saw it, in the others, as vivid and concrete, extended it straight from her companion to Charlotte'. On leaving the carriage, Maggie reflects that she 'couldn't have narrated [...] by what transition, what rather marked abruptness of change in their personal relation, their drive came to its end' (*GB* p.883).

What makes the vehicle's monitoring of such relations *circular* is the congruence James implies between his own aesthetic 'geometry' ('the circle within which' James necessarily limits his imaginative response (*LCFW* p.1041)) and the social and physical

¹² Adrian Poole, 'Introduction', in *What Maisie Knew*, ed. by Adrian Poole (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.vii-xxvi, p.xix.

perimeter of the city to whose ‘great rotundity’ he declared himself ‘more and more attached’.¹³

Social Circles: The Carriage

James would count his ‘momentous cab-drive’ from Euston station to Trafalgar Square in 1869 – ‘through dusky, tortuous miles’ and in ‘a greasy four-wheeler’ – as ‘an introduction to the rigidities of custom’.¹⁴ For Maggie Verver meanwhile, to have ‘driven, on a certain Wednesday, to Portland Place, instead of remaining in Eaton Square’ where her husband and her stepmother anticipate her, represents a deliberate ‘departure from custom’ (*GB* p.293). Notwithstanding their widely different uses and associations, the carriage and cab’s respective links with social status and sociability charged each vehicle with expectations of maintaining order.

The circling carriage is frequently an ominous image for James, describing a restrictive social as well as physical geography.¹⁵ In Hyde Park, ‘[t]he carriages [...] roll along in dense, far-stretching masses’ or ‘stand locked together in a wilderness of wheels and cockades’.¹⁶ Those encircling the Pincio in ‘A Roman Holiday’ (1873) represent what James takes to be ‘the unremunerative aspects of human nature’: an ‘oppressively frequent combination of coronets on carriage panels and stupid faces in carriages’.¹⁷ Long before the author’s first visit to Rome in 1869, the Pincio had come to represent an exhausted social circuit. In 1853, one American guidebook reported that ‘[t]he ring in which the carriages drive is so very small that each of them completes it and re-appears in about five minutes’, resulting in a motion at once studied and frantic: ‘Carriages [...] wheeling into line, move round in an unbroken succession, [...] so near to each other, that no one can stop without deranging the economy of the whole circle’. For those still able to boast a privately owned

¹³ To HJ Sr., 25 March 1878, *HJL*, II, pp.159-62, p.161.

¹⁴ ‘London’, p.220.

¹⁵ ‘I have first or last seen in a cab in the Corso everyone I ever saw anywhere before’, writes James to his brother William (19 April 1873, *HJL*, I, pp.363-69, p.368). And to his father reports: ‘Everyone seems to be in Rome and I constantly pass in the street carriage-loads of people I know. But [...] life is too short to go and see them all’ (4 March 1873, *HJL*, I, pp.345-49, p.347).

¹⁶ ‘The Suburbs of London’, *The Galaxy*, 24 (December 1877), 778-87, p.780.

¹⁷ ‘A Roman Holiday’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 32 (July 1873), 1-12, p.10.

vehicle, asserted this visitor, the carriage's circuit was a 'decayed' ritual, observed only by families 'who live in bondage to the miserable weakness of "keeping up appearances"'.¹⁸ By the 1870s, tour-guides were citing the 'giddy world' of the Pincio with limited enthusiasm; debating whether it was still worth going 'to watch the carriages in their dull habitual circle'.¹⁹ Tourists who did go encountered a drab spectacle, largely made up of hired vehicles, and bearing scarce resemblance to the splendid equipages described by Hawthorne in *The Marble Faun* (1860).²⁰ Arriving in Rome later in the century, Howells found the Pincio similarly oppressive: 'the drive which I had remembered as a long ellipse had narrowed to a little circle, where one could not have driven round faster than a slow trot without danger of vertigo' (fig.11).²¹



Figure 11: 'Piazza del Popolo'

¹⁸ George Stillman Hillard, *Six Months in Italy* (1853), 4th edn, 2 vols (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1854), II, p.41.

¹⁹ 'New Books', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 109 (1871), 440-64, p.457.

²⁰ Hawthorne's novel, following a group of American tourists in Rome, was accepted as a kind of fictional guidebook to the city: 'Here, in the sunny afternoons, roll and rumble all kinds of equipages, from the cardinal's old-fashioned and gorgeous purple carriage, to the gay barouche of modern date. Here horsemen gallop, on thoroughbred steeds. Here, in short, all the transitory population of Rome, the world's great watering-place, rides, drives, or promenades' (Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (1860) (Boston: Houghton, 1883), p.123).

²¹ Howells, *Roman Holidays and Others* (New York: Harper, 1908), pp.185-86.

This suggests an appropriately restrictive context for the Prince and Maggie's first meeting in a Roman carriage, an incident which Fanny Assingham identifies as imposing an embargo upon other – future and alternative – directions. On his wife's insistence that Maggie 'wasn't born to know evil' and 'must never know it', the Colonel remarks ironically that 'We're taking grand ways to prevent it', to which she again retorts:

We're not taking any ways. The ways are all taken; they were taken from the moment he came up to our carriage that day [...] in Rome, when [...] the Prince, who had got into the carriage with us, came home with us to tea. [...] It began, practically, I recollect, in our drive. (*GB* p.55)

The carriage ride is both informative and prescriptive, for it was during this drive, Fanny recalls, that 'Maggie happened to learn, by some other man's greeting of him, in the bright Roman way, from a street corner as we passed, that one of the Prince's baptismal names, the one always used for him among his relations, was Amerigo', the name of 'the pushing man who followed, across the sea, in the wake of Columbus' (*GB* p.55). Presenting Maggie with an opportunity 'to learn', whilst placing Amerigo 'among his relations', the carriage associates physical 'ways' and forward movement ('as we passed', 'the pushing man') with habitual ways ('the bright Roman way'); an instance of how, despite its almost intractable generality, the word 'way' is treated with peculiar and regular emphasis in *The Golden Bowl*.²² Later in the novel, Maggie endures a particularly oppressive carriage journey with her

²² Maggie and her father, like Fanny and the Colonel, ceaselessly return to their situation before his marriage to Charlotte, recalling 'the way it all happened' ('That was the way—that was the way' (*GB* p.471)). On Adam's proposal, Charlotte presses him to be 'sure of having exhausted all other ways', adding that 'you've more ways of being kind than anyone I ever knew' (*GB* p.156). When, driving home together in their brougham, the Colonel asks his wife whether it 'doesn't [...] rather depend on what [Charlotte] may most feel to be the right way' [to act], Fanny declares that 'there's only one way—for duty or delicacy' (*GB* p.199). Maggie, on the other hand, will come to realise that 'there were, for princesses of such a line, more ways than one of being a heroine' (*GB* p.395). Having discovered her husband's affair, the Princess is aware of her implicit office in 'seeing him through—he had engaged to come out at the right end' if only she would 'allow him his unexplained and uncharted, his one practicably workable way' (*GB* p.515).

husband during which Amerigo subtly deflects her efforts to alter the family foursome (she suggests holidays abroad), and after which, exiting the carriage under a brace of servants and footmen, she is left with ‘the sense of a life tremendously ordered and fixed’ (*GB* p.334). In the weeks that follow, the Princess experiences ‘terrors’ that take the form of ‘a prolonged repetition of that night-drive from the other house to their own’; the fear that she might ‘show him some shortest way with her that he would know how to use again’ (*GB* p.388).

Urban Circles: The Cab

The carriage’s repetitive motion reinforced established structures of familial and societal belonging. In Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence* (1920), the circling carriage is prescriptive for Newland Archer on relinquishing his mistress.

That vision of the past was a dream, and the reality was what awaited him in the house on the bank overhead: was Mrs. Welland’s pony-carriage circling around and around the oval at the door, [...] and Mr. Welland, already dressed for dinner, and pacing the drawing-room floor, watch in hand, with dyspeptic impatience—for it was one of the houses in which one always knew exactly what is happening at a given hour.

‘What am I? A son-in-law—’Archer thought.²³

For Prince Amerigo, loitering restlessly in Bond Street and yet a bachelor, it is precisely the apprehension of his new responsibilities as a son-in-law that make him ‘stop a hansom’ (*GB* p.13). As the ‘iron shutters’ of shops close ominously around him, conscious that his future is being sealed by lawyers, the Prince ‘pause[s] on corners, at crossings; [as] there kept rising for him, in waves, that consciousness [...] of an appeal to do something or other, before it was too late, for himself’ (*GB* p.13). The year following the publication of James’s novel, Howells would likewise figure the London traffic as a ‘flood’, describing how ‘the feverish activity of the cabs contributed to the effect of the currents and counter-currents,

²³ Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (New York: Appleton, 1920), p.215.

as they insinuated themselves into every crevice of the frequent “blocks”. Unlike the family carriage, the hansom was improvisatory in character and supremely convenient: ‘anything more like a song does not move on wheels, and its rapid rhythm suggests the quick play of fancy in that impetuous form’.²⁴ These agile two-wheelers respond to the mysterious whims of Maisie’s stepfather, Sir Claude, as when ‘he suddenly said in reference to some errand he had first proposed: “No, we won’t do that—we’ll do something else”’:

On this, a few steps from the door he stopped a hansom and helped her in; then following her he gave the driver over the top an address that she lost. When he was seated beside her she asked him where they were going; to which he replied: ‘My dear child, you’ll see.’ She saw while she watched and wondered ... (*WMK* p.98)

Whilst seemingly offering an escape from enclosed or familiar environments, however, the cab’s movement and arrangement of Londoners according to specific ‘circles’ implicated it in the city’s own formal and epistemological anxieties. For James, ‘the hansom cab’ was part of the quotidian and self-orienting detail of London life, falling into place alongside ‘the matutinal tea & toast, the British coal-scuttle, the dark back-bedroom, the dim front sitting-room, the *Times*, [...] the London dinner’, all of which, the author notes, ‘*partagent* my existence’.²⁵ The Londoners of James’s fiction likewise use cabs to indicate a local kind of knowledge: the acclimatised Amerigo jokes that ‘I do live in hansoms!’ (*GB* p.212), while it is ‘one of the irritating marks of her expertness’ that Kate Croy—that type of ‘the wondrous London girl’ (*WOD*, I, p.190)—is able conclude her meetings with Densher by demanding that he ‘call [her] a good cab’ (*WOD*, II, p.13).

²⁴ Howells, *London Films* (New York; London: Harpers, 1905), p.49, p.50. Implicitly evoking Disraeli’s description of hansoms as ‘the gondolas of London’, Howells refers to these vehicles as ‘craft [that] seemed to feel their way about through the maze of streets and squares and circles by the same instinct that serves a pilot on a river in the dark. Their knowledge [was] a thing of the nerves, not of the brains, [...] an affair of the subliminal consciousness’ (pp.50-51).

²⁵ To Theodore Child, 8 March 1884, *HJLL*, pp.154-56, p.155. Trollope praised the cab system for more literally regulating the Londoner’s position in relation to his city, as the means by which ‘[s]pace is [...] annihilated and the huge distances of the English metropolis are brought within the scope of mortal power’ (Trollope, *North America* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1863), p.211).

During inclement weather or late hours, the cab came to the individual's particular aid, imposing order on an urban wilderness. Susan Mizruchi thus reads the opening of *The Awkward Age* (1899), when Gus Vanderbank recognizes 'a congruity between the weather and the "four-wheeler" that, in the empty street, [...] waited and trickled and blackly glittered', as, '[a]t its most basic, [...] about the human relationship to nature, describing rules of behaviour that regularize nature's vicissitudes'.²⁶ There is a similar 'violence' of 'congruity' for Amerigo, at the vision of Charlotte's arrival in a four-wheeler – and in the 'drizzle' – at Portland Place (*GB* p.208). The cab appears to the Prince in response to the frustrations of ennui, with nothing 'appointed to fill the hours for him' (*GB* p.207).

For the stranger, and as a source of exclusive knowledge, however, the cab journey conversely represented opportunities for feeling or getting lost. Deciding that 'London [...] is rendered habitable by hansom cabs', the hero of Wells's *Kipps* (1905) describes how 'Day and night these trusty conveyances [return] the strayed Londoner back to his point of departure, and were it not for their activity in a little while the whole population, so vast and incomprehensible is the intricate complexity of this great city, would be hopelessly lost forever'.²⁷ James's 'greasy four-wheeler', into which he 'commits [him]self' for the purposes of transporting himself and his luggage from Euston to Morley's hotel, suggests nothing so much as 'the humiliation, in a great city', of not 'know[ing] where you are going'; a vagueness which yet manifests itself in terms of 'rigidities', and which points to a discrepancy within the cab system itself—both a heavily regulated system and a notoriously confusing one.

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century saw a particular resurgence of debates regarding the size, flexibility, and justice of London's cab 'radius' (*fig. 12*), the four-mile circle around Charing Cross according to which the journey's tariff was determined.²⁸

²⁶ Susan L Mizruchi, 'Reproducing Women in *The Awkward Age*', *Representations*, 38 (1992), 101-30, p.106.

²⁷ H. G. Wells, *Kipps* (New York: Scribner's 1906), p.310.

²⁸ An article in the *Standard*, published in 1900, summarised the problem: 'In 1831 a cab radius was first fixed and covered a distance of three miles from the General Post Office. This radius continued until 1867, when it was altered to four miles from Charing-cross, and

Complaints were not original but had become steadily more vociferous towards the end of the century. In 1892, the *Times* pointed out ‘that the principle of a radius, whatever its length, is at the best a very clumsy expedient’, since it ‘assumed that the conformation of London corresponds more or less exactly with some circle or other whose centre is Charing-cross’.²⁹ In the same year, the *Daily News* denounced the radius as ‘an antiquated and exploded arrangement’.³⁰ And in 1897 another correspondent, in the *Standard*, inquired whether it was ‘not time that some revision of cab fares beyond the four mile circle, or an alteration of the “circle” itself, should take place?’³¹

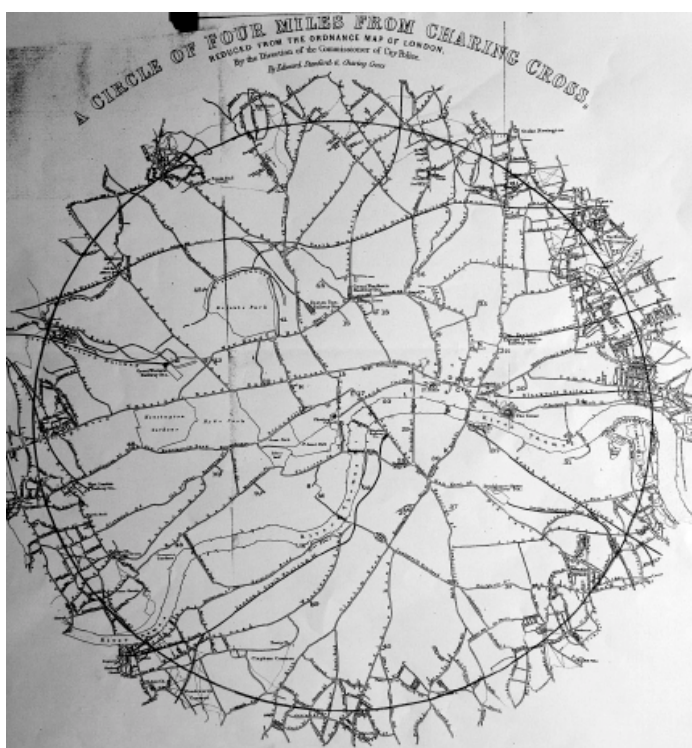


Figure 12: ‘The Cab Radius’

For the Londoner, the question of whether a journey was included within ‘the circle’ ought to have ensured that urban knowledge was always a matter of fixed relation. Yet

since then no alteration has been made. The present radius, therefore, has been in existence 27 years, and, having regard to the great increase during that period in the population of the outlying portions of London, we certainly think that the time has now arrived when the radius should be extended’ (‘The London Cab Radius’, *The Standard*, 26 February 1900, p. 5).

²⁹ ‘A movement seems to be on foot for an alteration...’, *The Times*, 11 January 1892, p. 9.

³⁰ ‘The Cab’, *Daily News*, 5 January 1892, p. 5.

³¹ ‘The Cab Radius’, *The Standard*, 13 January 1897, p. 3.

discrepancies in the logic of the radius and equity of the cabby in calculating fares were legendary. As Paul Dobraszczyk has shown, the contested nature of distances and prices in fare books well into the twentieth century was one reason why ‘the uncertainty at the root of passengers’ experience of cabs was never resolved’. In the worst-case scenarios, bewilderment as to one’s whereabouts combined with the threat of extortion to make the tourist’s journey an experience ‘governed by fear’.³²

For Amerigo, hailing a hansom in Bond Street on the eve of his marriage, the cab journey is an occasion for costly bewilderment. On his way to visit Fanny Assingham, who lives ‘far enough off, in long Cadogan Place’ (*GB* p.13), the Prince finds himself troubled by his inability to ‘measure’ his own ‘worth’ to the Ververs in ‘mere modern change’ – as a handful of ‘sovereigns and half-crowns’ (*GB* p.15).³³ He is concerned that ‘his own estimate’ will not be ‘proportionate’ (*GB* p.16). As the Prince nears his destination, these ‘unanswerable questions’ manifest themselves as anxiety over the amount required: ‘they really wouldn’t know—he wouldn’t know himself—how many pounds, shillings and pence he had to give’ (*GB* p.15).

[O]ne arrived at a scale that he was not, honestly, the man to calculate. Who but a billionaire could say what was fair exchange for a billion? That measure was the shrouded object, but he felt really, as his cab stopped in Cadogan Place, a little nearer the shroud. (*GB* p.16)

Amerigo’s arrival (‘as his cab stopped’) coincides with his ‘arriv[al] at a scale’, conflating attempts to ‘measure’ amounts of money and distance. The association of the Prince with his fee suggests the colloquial reference to a passenger as a ‘fare’. Here, the slight pun on ‘fair’

³² Paul Dobraszczyk, ‘Useful Reading? Designing Information for London’s Victorian Cab Passengers’, *Journal of Design History*, 21 (2008), 121-41, p.122, p.129.

³³ In the New York edition of the novel, Fanny’s residence is at a ‘due distance, in long Cadogan Place’, an estimation which reinforces Amerigo’s sense of his ‘due’ to Fanny for having ‘made his marriage’; an obligation which he also ponders in monetary terms (*The Golden Bowl* (New York: Scribner’s, 1909), 2 vols, I, p.20).

(as ‘fare’), and the need for ‘honest’ ‘calculat[ion]’ imply references to both the cab passenger and the cabby; a reputed swindler particularly of tourists.³⁴

Amerigo is, literally speaking, neither lost nor a tourist. Indeed, his journey is prefaced by a recollection of having ‘always liked his London’ (*GB* p.1), to a degree he will later proudly qualify as ‘the guidance he could really often give a cab-man’ (*GB* p.70). James makes use of the cab journey as a species of local and costly knowledge, however, to allegorise the Prince’s sense of his own foreignness in relation to the Ververs.³⁵

The cultivation of far-flung relations was indeed expensive, and the price of the fare according to geographical circles had always to be weighed against its necessity in extending social ones.³⁶ In a letter advising his brother of the feasibility of living in London, James warns that ‘the single item of cab fares is in itself a thing to be considered’, adding however that ‘[i]t is useless to say you wouldn’t use cabs [...] You would need human intercourse [...] & human intercourse in a *big* place inevitably entails certain expenses’.³⁷ Such expenses are at issue in *The Awkward Age*, when the retiring Mr. Longdon and young bachelor Vanderbank share a four-wheeler after a party. Offering his rooms ‘as a wind-up to the drive’, Van enjoys ‘the air of added extravagance with which [his visitor] said he would keep the cab’; suggesting both the increased charge and a movement outside prescribed limits (‘You young men!’ Longdon murmurs). The question of whether he ‘*had* better keep [the cab]’

³⁴ As *Punch* remarked sardonically: ‘The Book of Cab-fares [...] is well known [to have] suggested to [Shakespeare] the line in *Macbeth*, “fare is foul and foul is fare”’ (‘Shakespeare’s Library’, *Punch*, 19 November 1864, p. 213). An article in *Chambers Journal*, confirming that, ‘[a]t no time were cabmen a popular class in London’, cites ‘the numerous police-court cases in which cabmen figure as defendants’ (‘Cabs and Cabmen’, *Chamber’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*, 17 (22 November 1862), 332-34, p.332, p.333).

³⁵ Maggie herself is unsure of Amerigo’s worth: ‘I haven’t the least idea [...] what you cost’ (*GB* p.8).

³⁶ In Trollope’s *Phineas Redux* (1873), the narrator reflects that ‘[a] cab for going out to dinner was a necessity;—but his income would not stand two or three cabs a day. Consequently he never went north of Oxford Street, or east of the theatres, or beyond Eccleston Square towards the river. The regions of South Kensington and New Brompton were a trouble to him, as he found it impossible to lay down a limit in that direction which would not exclude him from things which he fain would not exclude’ (Trollope, *Phineas Redux* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874), p.198).

³⁷ To William James, 21 March 1881, *William and Henry James: Selected Letters*, ed. by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley (University Press of Virginia, 1997), pp.130-32, p.130.

continues to perturb his fascinated visitor as he turns over the ‘too many’ photographs of Van’s extensive ‘relation[s]’.³⁸

While the cab facilitated social mingling it also threatened less desirable kinds of contact. Matthew Newsom Kerr has shown that the pestiferous associations of the four-wheeler, used to transport patients to the hospital or to the morgue, extended to include a fear of social or cultural contamination.³⁹ In *Daisy Miller*, the American girl contracts Roman fever after taking a cab with a vulgar Italian to see the Colosseum by midnight. Winterbourne catches sight of her lone cab in the shadow of that ruin’s ‘dusky circle’, an ominous prefiguring of Daisy’s imperious exclusion from society. The same cab-driver will publish Daisy’s adventure to the scandalised group of compatriots – ‘the little American circle’ – at her hotel.⁴⁰

For Maisie, London’s circles extend socially and culturally, as well as geographically, as her increasing comprehension of adult relationships coincides with her transport between the varying and proliferating locations of her guardians. Poole makes the connection between *Maisie*’s own ‘interminable’ textual career, and the range of Maisie’s travels, whose extension to Boulogne James was obliged to prune in the serial version of the novel; reinstating the excised sections again in the New York edition.⁴¹ If, at her creation in 1897, the child’s sphere of ignorance represents ‘a circle as vast as the untravelled globe’ (*WMK* p.22), by 1908 James’s well-travelled heroine finds that her ‘immediate circle had witnessed the growth’ of ‘intimate connexions’ (*WMK* NYE p.193).

A connection of this sort is provided by the Exhibition in Earl’s Court, which Maisie and her stepmother attend to view ‘a collection of extraordinary foreign things’ (*WMK* p.138)

³⁸ *The Awkward Age* (1898) (London: Heinemann, 1899), p.2, p.5. Later in the novel, Van will affirm his reputation as one that is wont to ‘go about such a lot’, remarking that ‘[t]here isn’t an old cab-horse in London that’s kept at it, I assure you, as I am’ (p.154).

³⁹ Matthew L. Newsome Kerr, ‘“Perambulating fever nests of our London streets”: Cabs, Omnibuses, Ambulances, and Other “Pest-Vehicles” in the Victorian Metropolis’, *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 283-310. In H. G. Wells’ tale, ‘The Stolen Bacillus’ (1895), an anarchist alights from a hansom with a broken test-tube of the cholera germ, ‘carefully jostling his infected body against as many people as possible’ (‘The Stolen Bacillus’, in *The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents* (London: Macmillan, 1904), pp.1-16, pp.14-15).

⁴⁰ *Daisy Miller*, p.65, p.66.

⁴¹ Poole, (ed.), *What Maisie Knew*, p.xii.

as well as to mingle with ‘crowds [...] among whom they might possibly see some one they knew’ (*WMK* p.139). It is whilst exploring side-shows and curiosities that the child and Mrs Beale encounter Maisie’s father in the company of his new mistress, an exotic ‘brown lady’ (*WMK* p.143). ‘What followed’, the narrator reports, ‘was extraordinarily rapid’ (*WMK* p.144). Maisie is ‘thrust [...] into a hansom’ by Beale and ‘whisk[ed] [...] off’ to (yet another) ‘indistinguishable address’ (*WMK* p.145). For Maisie, the experience suggests ‘the Arabian Nights’:

From this minute they were in everything, particularly in such an instant ‘Open Sesame’ and in the departure of the cab, a rattling void filled with relinquished step-parents; they were, with the vividness, the almost blinding whiteness of the light that sprang responsive to papa’s quick touch of a little brass knob on the wall, in a place that, at the top of a short, soft staircase, struck her as the most beautiful she had ever seen in her life. (*WMK* pp.146-47)

Maisie is ushered into a room ‘gilded’ and stuffed with the spoils of empire—‘palm-trees’ and ‘silver boxes’—in the midst of which Beale offers his daughter the chance to travel with him and ‘the Countess’ to America (*WMK* p.147). As Maisie anxiously and wonderingly dithers, the ‘brown lady’ herself draws up in a cab. Maisie’s instant aversion to her father’s mistress—a ‘dreadful human monkey in a spangled petticoat’ (*WMK* p.161)—settles the question. The ‘brown lady’ is, Maisie reflects, ‘the only figure wholly without attraction that had become a party to an intimate connection formed in her immediate circle’ (*WMK* p.162). Yet as her fear puts in a plea for her own departure—‘Can’t I, please, be sent home in a cab?’ (*WMK* p.162)—her ‘detachment’ is hindered by apprehension about the fare: ‘Oh dear, I haven’t any money!’ (*WMK* p.164). The Countess swiftly intercedes, with a purse ‘whisked’ from her pocket, and Maisie’s conveyance as swiftly arrives: ‘The next moment they were in the street together, and the next the child was in the cab.’

‘Here’s money’, said the brown lady: ‘go!’ The sound was commanding: the cab rattled off. Maisie sat there with her hand full of coin. All that for a cab? As they passed a street lamp she bent to see how much. What she saw was a cluster of sovereigns. There *must* then have been great interests in America. (*WMK* p.164)

Maisie’s cab, which directly proclaims the Countess’s American ‘interests’, also alliteratively links ‘the brown lady’s’ racial otherness to transport, as the same motion that carries her in her hansom from the Exhibition—‘whisking her off’ (*WMK* p.145)—describes both the Countess, (‘whiskered’ (*WMK* p.162)), and her fare home, (‘whisked’ from her pocket (*WMK* p.164)). Her wealth is cynically connected with the promise of an extortionate fee, for ‘[t]he money’, the narrator critically remarks, ‘was far too much even for a fee in a fairy-tale’ (*WMK* p.165). Here Maisie’s ‘fare’ moves through fairytale intonations of its own (far fee fair). But the fairytale is quashed when, arriving home at Regent’s Park, Maisie is relieved of her embarrassment of riches by the housemaid, who ‘produced, on the exhibition offered under the dim vigil of the lamp [...] the half-crown that an unsophisticated cabman could pronounce to be the least he would take’ (*WMK* p.165).⁴²

The muted ‘exhibition’ of Maisie’s arrival, in a cab and under a ‘dim [...] lamp’, makes a rueful though homely ‘contrast to the child’s recent scene of light’ (*WMK* p.165), recalling the sideshows of the other ‘Exhibition’. The ‘blinding whiteness [...] of light’ (*WMK* p.146) that confronts Maisie on her arrival at the Countess’s also bears affinities with Amerigo’s sensation, on nearing Cadogan Place, of approaching a ‘a dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals’ (*GB* p.14). The experience recalls ‘a wonderful tale by Allan Poe, [...] the story of the shipwrecked Gordon Pym, who, drifting in a small boat further toward the North Pole—or was it the South?—than anyone had ever done, found at a given moment before him a thickness of white air’ (*GB* p.14). For both the Prince and Maisie, the

⁴² Later in the novel, as Maisie and Sir Claude ‘roll [...] westward in a hansom’ towards Hyde Park, Maisie will reflect how ‘It all came back [...] to the question of money’ (*WMK* p.114, p.113).

cab connects the Capital with the New World as destinations which elicit reactions of desire and fear.

Such journeys anticipate James's boast, in *English Hours*, and on behalf of the well-connected Londoner, that 'it is perfectly open to him to consider the remainder of the United Kingdom, or the British empire in general [...] as the mere margin, the fitted girdle', to the city itself.⁴³ But London's 'immeasurable circumference', James notes, is also what 'gives [the Londoner] the sense of a social and intellectual margin' (*EH* p.9). And it is due to this, as well as 'to the tremendous system of coming and going', that the urban passenger 'may cultivate unlimited vagueness as to the line of division between centre and circumference' (*EH* p.34). As we have seen, such a 'cultivat[ion] of vagueness', with respect to the Charing-Cross radius, represented the chief complaint of the cab passenger. The fact that James is specifically approving the usefulness of the London train system when he remarks that 'much of the loveliest scenery in England lies within a radius of fifty miles' (*EH* p.34) rather indicates than precludes his acknowledgment of such urban 'radii', as well as how their extent determined that of one's social and associational circle.

'a desire for information'

'[A]t the risk of exhibiting her as a young woman of vulgar tastes', the narrator of 'An International Episode' (1878) observes that Bessie Alden 'desired no higher pleasure than to drive about the crowded streets in a Hansom cab. To her attentive eyes they were full of a strange picturesque life' (*fig. 14*).⁴⁴

James's own experience of the cab or carriage ride as a tutelary fund of impressions anticipates his interest in the younger passenger. Noisy, spectacular, and odorous, the vehicles that rattle through his reminiscence are freighted with sensory and situational information. A

⁴³ 'London', in *English Hours*, pp.1-43, p.34. I use the 1905 text of James's essay here, as both closer to the date of *The Golden Bowl*, and more 'circular' in phrasing. In the 1888 version, HJ writes that the Londoner 'may cultivate unlimited vagueness as to the line of division between the center and the margin. It is perfectly open to him to consider the remainder of the United Kingdom, or the British empire in general [...] as the margin of the agglomeration on the Thames' (p.234).

⁴⁴ The reference, (which James does not, however, revise), is from the first (1878) edition of the tale (p.63). The illustration is from a 1902 edition.

carriage window in Paris provides his first impression: ‘the splendid perspective’ through which ‘a vibration of my very most infantine sensibility [...] got itself preserved for subsequent wondering reference’ (*SB* pp.53-54). Evoking the New York of James’s childhood, ‘the very air and odour’ of the carriage hired from Mr Hathorn’s livery stable in University Place (its ‘steaming, Irish pitch’) is ‘a connection [...] promoting [...] at a touch, to my consciousness, the stir of small [...] remembered things’ (*SB* pp.235, p.236). For the retrospective author of the Prefaces, dictating to his Remington, ‘the particular light [...] click of the [Parisian] cab-horse on the clear asphalt, with its sharpness of detonation [...] makes for the faded page today a sort of interlineation of sound’.⁴⁵ And the narrator of *The Middle Years* (1917), rifling through ‘old sources of impression’, fastens upon the ‘image’, ‘unsurpassably [...] majestic’, of ‘the great cab-rank, mainly formed of delightful hansoms, that stretched along Piccadilly from the top of the Green Park unendingly down’ (*MY* p.49).



Figure 13: ‘Piccadilly’

James’s fiction and travel writing emphasizes above all the communicative function of these vehicles. Hansoms are ‘heartless’, ‘predatory’, and invariably ‘overpaid’, but they

⁴⁵ The recollection is from James’s Preface to *The American* (*LCFW* p.1058).

are also vocal and demonstrative: likened to opera boxes, post-boxes, and theatres.⁴⁶ James refers to ‘the responsive hansom’, to ‘the chattering cab-stand’, and to drivers or *cocchieri* as a ‘garrulous race’.⁴⁷ In *Maisie*, cabs and carriages convey insults between vengeful parents; the sound of wheels corresponding to their delivery ‘with the dry rattle of a letter falling into a pillar-box’ or a ‘well-stuffed post-bag, delivered in due course at the right address’ (*WMK* p.10).

James himself would recall being imported via cab to convey a message on behalf of others: an instance of ‘sublime connection’. The occasion was his visit, in May 1869, to George Elliot at the home she controversially shared with George Henry Lewes.⁴⁸ Lewes’s son Thornton was ill, and with Lewes himself dispatched to the chemist for a remedy, James offered to go ‘as fast as a cab could carry me’ (*MY* p.69) for the doctor. James’s record of the incident emphasizes his role as both knowledge-bearer – ‘acting as a messenger of the gods [...] cleaving [...] the air [...] even in the dull four-wheeler of other days’ – and as participant in ‘a relation [...] dramatically determined’ (*MY* p.70, p.71).⁴⁹

The communicative function of such vehicles seems linked, for James, to their particular characteristics. As a perspective opening upon the city, the hansom recommended itself through its unique, forward-facing view (*fig.14*); a contrast to the four-wheeler or brougham, whose ‘usual box seat [...] practically blocks up the front windows’ (*fig.15*).⁵⁰ James’s notes the former’s spectacular advantage in ‘London’ (1888):

⁴⁶ ‘London’, p.220; *The Princess Casamassima* (London: Macmillan, 1886), p.230; *The Sense of the Past*, p.63. In ‘An English Easter’ (1877), James watches George Odger’s funeral procession through the window of his cab ‘as from a box at [a] play’ (‘An English Easter’, *Lippincott’s Magazine*, 20 (July 1877), 50-60, p.56).

⁴⁷ *A Little Tour in France* (Boston: Osgood, 1885), p.237; ‘James Russell Lowell’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 69 (January 1892), 35-51, p.38; Preface to *Roderick Hudson* (*LCFW* p.1043).

⁴⁸ In a letter to his father, HJ mentions the visit but not his role with the cab, possibly from a wish not to seem extravagant. In the letter, which I shall refer to again, HJ justifies his expenses during his travels by pointing out that ‘[i]t involves for one thing, a large amount of cab-hire’ (to HJ Sr., 10 May 1869, *CL* 1855-72, I, pp.309-15, p.310).

⁴⁹ Mark Goble reads the episode as anticipating HJ’s late interest in telegraphy (Goble, *Beautiful Circuits: Modernism and the Mediated Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p.84).

⁵⁰ Gilbey, *Modern Carriages*, p.23. Alexander Filson Young remarks upon this advantage: ‘Another thing that I enjoyed in my hansom ride was the sensation of seeing a great deal. I was able to look out of the windows at the side and see what was going on all round me as well as in front’ (Young, ‘Meditations in a Hansom’, *Saturday Review*, 18 November 1911, p.64).

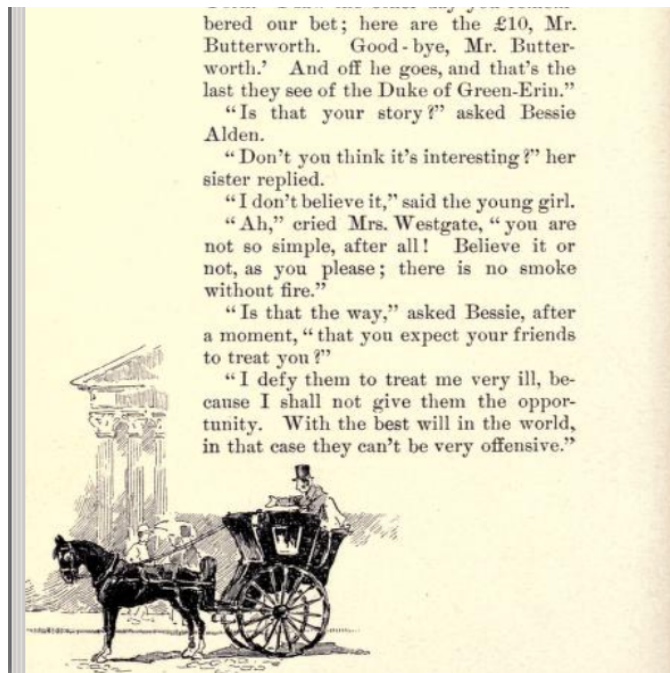


Figure 14: 'A Cabby'



Figure 15: 'his new brougham'

Everything shines more or less, from the window-panes to the dog-collars. So it all looks, with its myriad variations and qualifications, to one who surveys it over the apron of a hansom, while that vehicle of vantage, better than any box at the opera, spurts and slackens with the current. (p.228)

In 'A London Life' (1888), published a few months before James's essay, opera boxes are themselves imagined as cabs; as spaces within which adultery both takes place and is observed.⁵¹ Selina Berrington, like Ida Farange, keeps a carriage while keenly patronising hansoms; the latter affording opportunities for trysts with her lover Captain Crispin. Her hapless sister, Laura Wing, lives with Selina and her husband whilst periodically dreading the scandal of a divorce. During an evening at the opera, Selina removes herself from the box she shares with Laura and Mr Wendover (a decent and unassuming tourist whom they know from America), to hide in 'the opposite box' of friends who cover her elopement from the building with the Captain. Left alone with Wendover, Laura's own position becomes delicate.

Laura hesitated, looking down the curved lobby, where there was nothing to see but the little numbered doors of the boxes. They were alone in the lamplit bareness; the *finale* of the act was ringing and booming behind them. In a moment she said: 'I'm afraid I must trouble you to put me into a cab.'⁵²

Should Laura return to the opera box, she re-enters a 'little upholstered receptacle which', like the cab, 'was so public and yet so private', a space in which her possibilities for respectability are both jeopardised, and, enshrined by Mr Wendover's imminent marriage proposal, kept ironically intact. Meanwhile, the 'home' she should return to in an actual cab, might, on the basis of Selina's indiscretions, no longer (practically and optionally speaking) exist. The

⁵¹ Stokes has drawn attention to the use of cabs in James's tale to destabilize and transform previously stable or 'familiar locations' (the museum, the opera) (Stokes, ' "Encapsulation": Horse-Drawn Journeys in Late-Victorian Literature', p.250).

⁵² 'A London Life', *Scribner's Magazine*, 3 (June 1888), 671-88; 4 (July-September 1888), 64-82, 238-49, 319-30, p.247.

‘little numbered doors of the [opera] boxes’ emphasize the implied analogy with cabs, (also identified by their numbers), as if lining a ‘curved’ and ‘lamplit’ street, and with traffic ‘ringing and booming behind’.

James’s own ‘vehicle of vantage’ in ‘London’ is recalled in *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), where the author remarks upon another such vehicular ‘vantage’ point, affording him ‘an hour of early apprehension’ from a more old-fashioned conveyance:

that coign of vantage enjoyed by me one June afternoon of 1855 in the form of the minor share of the box of a carriage that conveyed us for the first time since our babyhood [...] through so much of a vast portentous London. I was an item in the overflow of a vehicle completely occupied, and I thrilled with the spectacle my seat beside the coachman so amply commanded—without knowing at this moment why [...] I had been marked for such an eminence. (*SB* p.276)

The description contains an allusion of which, as Poole notes, ‘James was revealingly fond’.⁵³ Banquo, approving Macbeth’s castle on the basis that it provides a nesting-place for the ‘temple-haunting martlet’, observes: ‘no juttie, frieze, /Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird/Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle’.⁵⁴ The echo is suggestive as to how James’s different retrospective positions of ‘vantage’ seem to inform each other. While the seat he occupies in the crowded Victorian coach is high up beside the driver, the advantageous perspective of the hansom passenger was afforded by the driver’s removal, perched on a dickey above and behind the vehicle, and thus granting his fare an unobstructed front view. The overhanging protrusion of the cabby’s seat in the hansom suggests – still more than James’s lofty seat in the coach – the ‘juttie’ occupied by Shakespeare’s bird (or opera box emblazoned with a ‘frieze’), so that James’s ‘coign of vantage’ in 1855, reimagined in 1913, seems imaginatively to occupy both positions.

⁵³ Poole, ‘Introduction’, in *Washington Square*, ed. by Adrian Poole (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.vii-xxvii, p.xxv.

⁵⁴ *Macbeth*, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, pp.773-800, p.779, I:6. 6-8.

Like the martlet, Maisie enjoys positions of vantage ('hanging over bannisters', balconies, 'bastion[s]' and 'crooked ramparts') and dwells, despite her innocence, in spurious conditions.⁵⁵ She also increasingly explores London via hansom, 'star[ing] straight before her' at the sights and vices of that city (*WMK* p.146). The novel's publication in 1897 coincided with London's 'peak' concentration of horse-cabs, of which 69% were hansoms.⁵⁶ Christina Britzokalis' description of Maisie's urban education – '[t]he metaphor of the city as traumatic nursery' – is aptly demonstrated by this vehicle; itself both a 'technology of vision' and a 'disciplinary space' over whose 'apron', like that of a nurse, Maisie looks out.⁵⁷

The lessons to be learned from the cab-ride were not always pleasant. As he is driven through London on another youthful occasion (this time in 1858), James is impressed by 'embodied and exemplified "horrors" in the streets':

I well remember the almost terrified sense of their salience produced in me [...] by a long, an interminable drive westward from the London Bridge railway-station. It was a soft June evening, with a lingering light and swarming crowds, as they then seemed to me, of figures reminding me of George Cruikshank's Artful Dodger and his Bill Sikes and his Nancy [...] which pressed upon the cab, the early-Victorian four-wheeler, as we jogged over the Bridge, and cropped up in more and more gas-lit patches for all our course, culminating, somewhere far to the west, in the vivid picture, framed by the cab-window, of a woman reeling backward as a man felled her to the ground with a blow in the face. (*SB* pp.309-10)

The passenger receives his (literally striking) impression the same instant the victim receives her 'blow'. The assault of life from without the iron-wheeled, 'early Victorian' cab of James's

⁵⁵ *WMK* p.45, p.222, p.221. At the hotel in Boulogne, Maisie 'hung again over the rail; she felt the summer night; she dropped down into the manners of France' (*WMK* p.236).

⁵⁶ See Trevor May, *Gondolas and Growlers: The History of the London Horse Cab* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1995), p.v, p.36.

⁵⁷ Christina Britzokalis, 'Technologies of Vision in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*', *NOVEL*, 34 (2001), 369-90, p.372.

memory would likely have been matched by the vehicle's own noisy and physically jarring environment.⁵⁸ The introduction of 'Earl Shrewsbury and Talbot's indiarubber-tyred Forder-built cab[s]' in 'about 1880' reduced both the noise and the jarring.⁵⁹ Yet Amerigo's somewhat bewildered response to Charlotte's partiality for four-wheelers—'Did you ever enjoy knocking about in such discomfort?' (*GB* p.212)—suggests that, even by 1904, the conditions afforded by the 'growler' left something to be desired.

'Knocking about' has connotations of moral as well as physical collision: 'You don't mean you were knocking about in *cabs* with him?' exclaims Selina Berrington hypocritically to her unmarried sister.⁶⁰ As James's own experience suggests, there is an ambiguous knowledge to be gained by such collisions. In the course of her studies with Mrs Wix, Maisie 'acquire[s] a vivid vision of every one who had ever, in her phrase, "knocked against" her — some of them oh so hard!' (*WMK* p.23). Travel itself becomes a kind of slang for initiation into the scandalous behaviour of adults: the narrator reports, for instance, that Maisie 'knew all about "bolting"' (*WMK* p.157), and she is aware that 'there seemed always to be "shames" connected [...] with her migrations' (*WMK* p.25).⁶¹

The extra-marital presences that make Maisie's parents shameful come appended to the vehicles enabling these 'migrations'. As early acts of defiance, Ida and Beale draw up to collect the child from each other's abodes in private carriages, showcasing their new attachments. Miss Overmore's is 'the face that showed brightly at the window of the brougham', while a young Maisie sees '[t]he carriage, with her mother in it' and 'with the gentleman who was [...] always there' (*WMK* p.25, p.9). Towards the end of the novel, Ida's inevitable gentleman, the difficult-to-'place' Mr Tischbein, is first euphemised simply as 'the man who stands the cabs' (*WMK* p.205), indicating how relations have themselves become

⁵⁸ 'Conversation in a Cab is [...] impossible, unless you have the voice of a fog-horn [...] You can, however, *feel* a great deal—notably the hardness [...] of the seats, and the shocks of collision with the elbows and knees of your fellow-travellers' ('The Growler', *Punch*, 13 May 1882, p.221).

⁵⁹ Moore, *Omnibuses and Cabs*, p.267.

⁶⁰ 'A London Life', p.81.

⁶¹ In *The Awkward Age*, a novel which likewise examines the exposure of young girls to the 'London world' that 'so fearfully batters and bruises them' (p.187), Nanda Brookenham remarks that 'Girls are such hacks—they can't be anything else' (p.154).

vehicular, unmoored from residences. This kind of prepositional remarking of the whereabouts of identity (Maisie's comprehension of 'who stands' where) begins with an early and careful distinction between the names and appearances of various carriages:

The brougham was a token of harmony, of the fine conditions papa, this time, would offer: he had usually come for her in a hansom, with a four-wheeler behind for the boxes. The four-wheeler with the boxes on it was actually there; but mamma was the only lady with whom she had ever been in a conveyance of the kind always of old spoken of by Moddle as a private carriage. Papa's carriage was, now that he had one, still more private, somehow, than mamma's; and when at last she found herself quite on top, as she felt, of its inmates and gloriously rolling away, she put to Miss Overmore, [...] a question of which the motive was a desire for information ... (*WMK* p.25)

That it is Maisie's nurse who gives a name to 'the kind' of 'conveyance' she encounters establishes the pedagogical function vehicles will acquire in the novel, their connection with 'a desire for information'. If the occasion of the brougham represents Maisie's first lesson, it is while sitting in a hired French carriage, surrendering to its 'swing' in a manner very different from Madame Bovary, that she will ironically encounter her 'moral sense' (*WMK* p.132).⁶² In the first instance, Beale's selection of a brougham in lieu of the habitual hansom makes room for Miss Overmore, besides flaunting an equipage 'still more private [...] than mamma's'. The brougham was also the bachelor's vehicle of choice: 'a refined and glorified street cab that [made] a convenient carriage for a gentleman and

⁶² The most notorious cab-scene in literature was, and still is, the drive taken by Léon Dupuis and Emma Bovary in the fiacre in Flaubert's novel: 'On the streets along the harbour, in the midst of drays and casks, the good folk opened large, wonder-stricken eyes at this sight, so extraordinary in the provinces — a cab with blinds drawn, appearing to be shut more closely than a tomb, and tossing like a vessel' (Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: A Study of Provincial Life*, ed. by Ferdinand Brunetière and Robert Arnot, 2 vols (Chicago: Magee, 1904), I, p.56.

especially for a man of such independence as one who carried his own carpet bag'.⁶³ In such respects, the carriage is typical of 'token' gestures of generosity which, with Maisie as their pretext, function really as acts of parental one-upmanship. The outcome of Maisie's question to her governess—'Did papa like you just the same while I was gone?'—introduces a third vehicle, resulting from 'a merry little scrimmage [...] of which Maisie caught the surprised perception in the white stare of an old lady who passed in a victoria' (*WMK* p.26). The admonitory glare is appropriately framed by this carriage's well-advertised propriety: 'Set off by Her Royal Highness [...] people at once understood that it was "the correct thing" to ride in them.'⁶⁴

James's deliberate specificity as to vehicles here has been usefully noted by Adrian Poole and Christopher Ricks, in their respective editions of the novel. The stratified range of vehicles provides a limbering frame for Maisie's grasp of the relational differences between things and people, also reflected in her use of the carriages as both temporary and temporal fixtures (this time, of old, usually, now). Here, as Ricks observes, '[t]he packing order is clear enough'. Of the cabs and carriages consecutively taken stock of by Maisie: 'The hansom was named after an architect; the brougham, after a lord; the victoria, after the Queen'.⁶⁵

Throughout his fiction, Poole notes, 'James was particular about vehicles and their connotations of social status'.⁶⁶ His first tale, 'A Tragedy of Error' (1864), unfolds at a French seaport and opens with 'a low English phaeton' in which a woman is seated, 'with her veil down' and 'her parasol held closely over her face'.⁶⁷ The narrator's remark upon the national origin of this vehicle is significant: 'By about 1850', Gilbey sniffs, the phaeton of respectable and English design 'had become the hack carriage of continental cities, and its degradation to this capacity cost [the vehicle] [...] its social standing'.⁶⁸ With its proportionately high wheels and dangerously light structure, the phaeton is doubly

⁶³ Gilbey, *Modern Carriages*, p.18. Gilbey is quoting Lord Brougham himself here.

⁶⁴ Gilbey, *Modern Carriages*, p.48.

⁶⁵ Christopher Ricks, (ed.), *What Maisie Knew* (London: Penguin Classics, 2010), p.300.

⁶⁶ Poole, (ed.), *What Maisie Knew*, p.278.

⁶⁷ 'A Tragedy of Error', *Continental Monthly*, 5 (February 1864), 204-16, p.204.

⁶⁸ Gilbey, *Modern Carriages*, p.14. The difference between English and continental carriages is both important and obvious: 'Their rattle is enough to distinguish them' (p.50).

appropriate for Hortense, an adulteress whose risky scheme to murder her husband ultimately backfires (her lover is killed instead). In *Roderick Hudson*, Christina Light's main priority is to be seen, which explains the 'well-appointed landau' as her family's carriage of choice: a vehicle that opened low to reveal the fashionable dress of its occupant, and of the type frequently to be met rolling round the Pincio.⁶⁹ In 'The Chaperon', Rose Tramore reasserts her mother's social position by positioning her 'brilliant, conspicuous, in the eternal victoria'—a carriage that was both open and, as noted, eminently respectable.⁷⁰

Poole identifies Mrs Tramore as a type—with Selina and Ida—women who 'all [...] want to "go out" and *stay* "out"', and Rose has her 'own description' for her mother's 'air'; that 'it was the air of waiting for the carriage'.⁷¹ When James collected the tale for *The Real Thing* in 1893, he revised 'air' to 'attitude'.⁷² The latter word, denoting Mrs Tramore's expression but also her eager inclination towards society, reinforces the relational sense of carriages as they are used by Maisie. Like Maisie and her satellites, the Tramore children also 'cling together' without parental centres of gravity to hold them in place: 'Collectively [...] they clung to their father, whose *attitude* in the family group, however, was casual and intermittent'.⁷³

Mrs Tramore's own 'attitude of waiting for the carriage' suggests the sense of 'carriage' as a bearing or 'attitude' in itself; a sense Ricks observes, noting the 'faint pun on how impressively [Ida] carries herself, a lady who will in due course become her ladyship'. Adding that '[i]t is the word *carriage* that can move across from a class of vehicle to the money that sets all this in motion', Ricks cites James's particular emphasis on this money in 'The Suburbs of London' (1877). James is pointing out 'the fine folks in the carriages' in Hyde Park:

⁶⁹ Christina's display 'made observers numerous and [gave] the habitués of the Pincian plenty to talk about'. Her carriage is made still more conspicuous by 'the poodle in the front seat' (*RH*, I, p.121).

⁷⁰ 'The Chaperon', p.669.

⁷¹ Poole, (ed.), *What Maisie Knew*, p.xiv; 'The Chaperon', p.723.

⁷² 'The Chaperon', in *The Real Thing and Other Tales* (London: Macmillan, 1893), pp.181-249, p.214.

⁷³ 'The Chaperon' (1891), p.63, my emphasis.

If the spectators testify to English leisure, the carriages testify more particularly to English incomes. To keep a carriage and pair in London costs, I believe, about five hundred pounds a year; the number of people driving about at this expense defies any powers of calculation at the command of the contemplative stranger.⁷⁴

The word ‘testify’ is suggestive here, for, as I will shortly discuss, James’s novels recognize how such conspicuous vehicles are made to ‘testify’ in divorce courts. But what is chiefly a matter for ‘contemplat[ion]’ is the ‘expense’ of the carriages themselves, which are such as to baffle ‘any power of calculation’. The need to exercise such ‘power[s]’ at all suggests, analogically, the ‘costly cab[s]’, about which James also periodically complains, whose fares must be precisely ‘calculat[ed]’, and which represented a notorious source of confusion, particularly for visitors or strangers.⁷⁵ While the carriage asserted its occupant’s position relative to others in society, the cab regulated the Londoner’s position relative to his city; a position reasserted, as James notes, ‘by a constant mental act of reference’.⁷⁶

Whether measuring relative positions (physical, social) or being brought to ‘testify’ upon (adulterous) relations, the cab or carriage journey effectively translated knowledge *as* relation into knowledge *of* relation, a peculiarly Jamesian conflation.

‘A Question of a Carriage or a Cab’

A particular logic for reading knowledge in *The Golden Bowl* in terms of transport is suggested by the dynamic, interrogative pace at which characters make their discoveries. Jonah Siegel reminds us that James’s novel, ‘though it gives the impression of stately, almost hieratic, development, is also surprisingly characterized by a remarkable amount of

⁷⁴ Ricks, (ed.), *What Maisie Knew*, p.301; ‘The Suburbs of London’, p.780.

⁷⁵ To HJ Sr., 10, 12 May 1869, *CL* 1855-72, I, pp.309-15, p.312. HJ deprecates ‘the idea of thrusting myself into my finery and travelling faraway to Kensington in a costly cab in order to grin away half an hour in the Nortons’ drawing room’. In the same letter to his father, justifying his expenses during his first sojourn in Europe, HJ cites cab-fare as part of his necessary ‘budget’; that which has not been ‘trivial, careless, or random expenditure’ (p.310).

⁷⁶ ‘Practically, of course, one lives in a quarter, in a plot; but in imagination, and by a constant mental act of reference, the sympathizing resident inhabits the whole’ (‘London’, p.222).

movement at key moments'.⁷⁷ Stillness, indeed, is only positively identified as a condition of the Ververs' departure for America, and specifically when 'the[ir] carriage was out of sight' (*GB* pp.547). The moment, observes the narrator, 'gave to the air something of the quality produced by the cessation of a sustained rattle. Stillness, when the Prince and Princess returned from attending the visitors to their carriage, might have been said to be not so much restored as created' (*GB* pp.546-47).

Nonetheless, stillness remains a pervasive interpretative idea. The eponymous bowl itself, an *objet d'art* to be examined at close-range, represents a focal point for meditation, exacting a contemplative stasis on the part of the reader or character. It 'stands there [a]waiting' the notice of Maggie's adulterous husband: "'Perhaps he'll never see it—if it only stands there waiting for him. He may never again,'" said the Princess, "come into this room"' (*GB* p.407). This room is the central site of action in Hilary Schor's reading of the novel, which, acknowledging Maggie's adventure as a 'quest' that follows 'the clearest structure of a detective novel', nevertheless treats 'the arrival [...] of knowledge' as passively received, during a concentrated and interior instant:

What James has done is to stage the arrival not so much of knowledge as of conviction in a single [...] and highly economical moment, with a single, haunted object. Time and space have to collapse for the bowl to testify against its admirers: the moment of the first visit to the shop must be superimposed upon the second [...] The shop itself, in the form of its fairy-tale owner, must come to the house and the street to the 'red room'.⁷⁸

The cab or carriage journey, I will suggest, performs its own 'economical' conflation between knowledge, form, and 'testimony', corresponding to that outlined by James in his

⁷⁷ Jonah Siegel, 'Speed, Desire, and the Museum: *The Golden Bowl* as Art Romance', *HJR*, 23 (2002), 233-45, p.235.

⁷⁸ Hilary Margo Schor, 'Reading Knowledge: Curiosity in *The Golden Bowl*', *HJR*, 26 (2005), 237-45, p.238, p.242.

Notebooks. Here, James's 'rotary motion' describes 'the reasons which each of the parties give the other'; invoking as Barbara Leckie has noted, the interrogative procedure of the divorce court.⁷⁹ James's vehicles participate in this procedure, in a way that recognizes both their literary associations and the formal characteristics of the journey itself. Such associations are at work when Charlotte pays a visit to the Prince; alone, and in a cab whose unforeseen approach is yet watched expectantly by Amerigo himself:

There was at first [...] for the young man, no faint flush in the fact of the direction taken, while he happened to look out, by a slow-jogging four-wheeled cab which, awkwardly deflecting from the middle course, at the apparent instance of a person within, began to make for the left-hand pavement and so at last, under further instructions, floundered to a full stop before the Prince's windows. [...]

Charlotte Stant, at such an hour, in a shabby four-wheeler and a waterproof, Charlotte Stant turning up for him at the very climax of his special inner vision, was an apparition charged with a congruity at which he stared almost as if it had been a violence. (*GB* p.208)

To Amerigo, the arrival of Charlotte Stant – it is actually of Mrs Verver – 'in a shabby four-wheeler', announces her intention to resume their affair. Her 'demonstration' falls outside any private system of reference shared by the former lovers, however (the Prince recognises the act as portentous, while noting that it is not part of their history). Charlotte's 'meaning' relies rather on 'the conscious quaintness of her rickety "growler"' (*GB* p.210).⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Barbara Leckie, *Culture and Adultery: The Novel, the Newspaper, and the Law 1857-1914* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p.192. Leckie argues that James's formal and epistemological strategies mimic those of both divorce-court journalism and literary censorship: 'Each of the characters works to hide not the adultery, but their knowledge of the adultery' (p.157), and her connection of such strategies with the 'rotary motion' James cites in his *Notebooks* is particularly instructive to my argument here. Likewise, in *What Maisie Knew*, Leckie argues, 'adultery is translated as a question of knowledge' (p.170).

⁸⁰ The four-wheeler was 'a confined cubical box upon four noisy wheels, with two seats, which are invariably uncomfortable, and two windows, which always rattle'. Its nickname, 'growler' was '[i]n delicate reference, first to the rumbling roar which accompanies its egress, and secondly to the

For James's reader, this somewhat anachronistic vehicle remarks upon an equally hackneyed tradition. By the nineteenth century, the cab's association with adulterous liaisons was well established according to both literary and factual sources. Henry Moore's *Omnibuses and Cabs* (1902) records that while the four-wheeler was more obviously suspect, given its size, even the smarter hansoms 'soon became considered the vehicles of the fast and disreputable'.⁸¹ For the novelist, the use of the cab to denote adultery was commonplace.⁸² As Michel Riffaterre observes, of the famously risqué cab-scene in *Madame Bovary* (1856):

This hackney coach is not of Flaubert's invention, it is a prop borrowed from the adulteress system: honesty in a wife presupposes she has no secrets from her husband and so she is at liberty to use his carriage and horses as she pleases. Infidelity calls for secrecy and requires a cabman who does not know her. [...] This *fiacre* cancels out the meaning of the family-conveyance and posits intrigue.⁸³

Selected by its passenger for reasons of stealth and (relative) anonymity, the literary cab so reliably apprehended its reader of a particular 'intrigue' that its protection as a getaway vehicle was somewhat compromised. Indeed, towards the end of the century, the cab allegorised less the act of adultery (as a space in which relations took place) than its discovery, insidiously aligning itself with mechanisms of detection. The adulteress in Maupassant's 'The Rendez-Vous' (1889), Madame Haggan, is as weary of taking cabs as she is of her affair: 'that rosary of meetings, [...] on the road to love, and those stations, which were so monotonous, so fatiguing, so similar to each other'. Any excitement at covertly meeting her lover is eclipsed by the sensational prospect of imminent discovery:

grumbling grumpiness of the man who drives it' ('A Handbook to Knowledge', *Punch*, 13 May 1882, p.221).

⁸¹ Henry Charles Moore, *Omnibuses and Cabs: Their Origin and History* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1902), p.225.

⁸² In his much broader survey of adultery fiction, Bill Overton refers to 'the hackney cab' as 'one of those vehicles notorious for illicit sex' (*Fictions of Female Adultery, 1684-1890: Theories and Circumtexts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.195).

⁸³ Michel Riffaterre, 'Flaubert's Presuppositions', *Diacritics*, 11 (1981), 2-11, p.9.

As soon as she was in the cab, she took another veil, which was as thick and dark as a domino mask, out of her pocket, and put it on. [...] Oh! What misery she endured [...] Certainly, the cabmen guessed. She felt sure of it, by the very way they looked at her, and the eyes of these Paris cabmen are terrible! When one remembers they are constantly remembering, in the Courts of Justices, [...] faces of criminals whom they have only driven once [...] In two years she had employed at least a hundred to a hundred and twenty [...] and they were so many witnesses, who might appear against her at a critical moment.⁸⁴

The driver's recruitment as a spy rather than an ally anticipates his visibility in the divorce court, with whose 'strategies', as Leckie has pointed out, James's novel strongly aligns itself.⁸⁵ As physical evidence of a meeting, both the cab and the carriage featured prominently in testaments to adultery, with courts invariably enlisting drivers and footmen as witnesses. Thus, in the case of *Dunn v Dunn* (1888), Thomas Savage, 'a coachman in the employ of Mr Dunn, reported that he had driven Mrs Dunn' to her lover's address 'four or five times a week when Mr Dunn was away'. He added that 'Mrs Dunn had several times left the carriage and taken a cab'.⁸⁶ In the French-Brewster Divorce case (1889), Mrs Geraldine French-Brewster found it necessary to insist that on her visits to have tea with Captain Gore, 'I invariably had my carriage; never a cab'.⁸⁷ And in another high-profile suit of 1897, Countess Violet Cowley testified that Lord Cowley and his mistress, Mrs Charrington, were able to correspond, 'sending letters by cabmen'. Both Charrington's coachman, William Turner, and the 'carriage groom—a pale young "tiger"'—were included amongst the witnesses, and 'told of occasions on which Mrs Charrington had been driven to Lord Cowley's lodgings at Trevor-square':

⁸⁴ Guy de Maupassant, 'The Rendez-Vous' (1889), in *The Complete Short Stories* (New York: Black, 1903), pp.648-51, p.650.

⁸⁵ Leckie, *Culture and Adultery*, p.158.

⁸⁶ 'A Book Maker's Divorce Suit', *York Herald*, 4 February 1888, p.6.

⁸⁷ 'The French-Brewster Divorce Case', *The Morning Post*, 21 December 1889, p.2.

Counsel: 'Now let me understand. This was a brilliant yellow carriage, was it not?'

'Primrose colour, sir.'

'And your livery?'—'Was dark, sir.'

'And you would have a footman with you?'—'A carriage groom, sir.'

'Altogether, a very showy turn-out?'—'Very smart, sir.'

'And one that would attract some attention in a place like Trevor-square?'

'I dare say it did, sir', replied the coachman, complacently.⁸⁸

If for secret appointments cabs offered anonymity and celerity, the private carriage, conversely, bore a signature. In 'The Special Type' (1900), the appearance of an affair between Frank Brivet and Alice Dundene—'a studied, outrageous *affichage*'—is contrived through 'elaborate arrivals and departures at stations for everyone to see, and [...] his brougham standing always — half the day and half the night — at their doors'.⁸⁹ Like the 'rotary motion' to which he subjects the interrogations of the divorce-court, James recognizes, in a Notebook entry of December 1895, the available irony in 'the circumstances' of a society divorce 'if one turns it in a certain way. The way is, of course, that the husband doesn't care a straw for the *cocotte*' (CN p.145). Brivet's conspicuous carriage provides the necessary evidence for his divorce. The narrator remarks that '[h]e has had to keep a brougham, and the proper sort of man, just for that alone. In other words unlimited publicity'.⁹⁰

The coachman was likewise summoned to give evidence in the luridly publicised Dilke scandal of 1886, which James read about, and which, as Leckie points out, directly preceded the author's 'first Notebook entry for *The Golden Bowl*', on 12 January 1887.⁹¹ In a letter to Grace Norton, James confesses that the case holds 'a certain [...] low interest' for one

⁸⁸ 'Society Divorce Suit', *Reynold's Newspaper*, 24 January 1897, p.6.

⁸⁹ 'The Special Type', *Collier's Weekly*, 25 (16 June 1900), 10-11, p.14.

⁹⁰ 'The Special Type', p.14.

⁹¹ Leckie, *Culture and Adultery*, p.185.

who ‘happen[ed] to know [...] most of the people concerned, nearly and remotely, in it’.⁹²

Charles Grant, Dilke’s driver, conceded that he had driven his lordship in his brougham to Mrs Crawford’s lodgings and the record reflected that:

From the box of the carriage [the] witness could see into the rooms of 27, Young-street. The front window was large and low, and another window at the back enabled him to see right through. He could see Sir Charles and a lady, who ‘weren’t doing nothing except sitting and talking’. He never saw any impropriety taking place on those occasions.⁹³

On the occasion of Mrs Verver taking a cab to visit her stepson-in-law, the reader is privy to a similarly innocuous teatime tableau while the four-wheeler waits directly outside ‘the Prince’s windows’ (*GB* p.208). Charlotte and Amerigo’s meticulous accounts of each other’s ‘programme’ (*GB* p.215), and that of their estranged *sposi*, however, which include exact times and places of arrival and departure, and which must be made to tally – ‘it seems to me we must say the same thing’ (*GB* p.218) – resemble witness statements. Charlotte reports that, having arrived at her husband’s house ‘before eleven’, Maggie had once again ‘gone out—taking the carriage for something he had been intending but that she offered to do instead’.

The Prince appeared to confess, at this, to his interest.

‘Taking, you mean, *your* carriage?’

‘I don’t know which, and it doesn’t matter. It’s not a question,’ she smiled, ‘of a carriage the more or the less. It’s not a question even, if you come to that, of a cab. It’s

⁹² James reports that: ‘The London mind is now absorbed in the great “Dilke Scandal”—no very edifying chapter of social history’ (To Grace Norton, 23 August 1885, *HJL*, III, pp.96-99, p.98).

⁹³ ‘The Crawford Divorce Case’, *Blackburn Standard*, 24 July 1886, p.2.

so beautiful,' she said, 'that it's not a question of anything vulgar or horrid.' (*GB* p.215)

Charlotte ostensibly addresses, and dismisses, any possibility of resentment over Maggie's thoughtlessness in taking her carriage. But she seems also to align 'the question of a carriage' or 'a cab' (and particularly a cab) with assumptions of other things—'vulgar and horrid'—that might have been intimated by Amerigo's prompting. Meanwhile, the 'question of a carriage' or a cab, gracefully discounted by Mrs Verver, nevertheless interposes itself at key junctures throughout her conversation with the Prince. Charlotte twice asks, rhetorically, and with respect to their union, 'what else can we do?' (*GB* p.209, p.214) and is twice deflected by Amerigo who in turn inquires 'what had become of her carriage', and 'where [she had] been' in her cab (*GB* p.211, p.214). Though such inquiries superficially 'help [...] him [...] to let her immediate appeal pass without an answer' (*GB* p.211), they singularly fail as attempts at small talk, since the apparently mundane question of transport leads irrevocably towards other questions that more nearly concern their relationship. Charlotte's vivid account of her 'wild ramble' across town, to which the Prince refers 'as from mere interest in her adventure' (*GB* p.214), is, like her expressed preference for 'shabby' four-wheelers, at once an assertion of her liberty and her neglect. Unlike the Prince, who 'never go[es] out', she has been

'Everywhere I could think of—except to see people. I didn't want people—I wanted too much to think. But I've been back at intervals—three times; and then come away again. My cabman must think me crazy—it's very amusing; I shall owe him, when we come to settle, more money than he has ever seen. I've been, my dear,' she went on, 'to the British Museum—which, you know, I always adore. And I've been to the National Gallery [...] I wanted to go to the Tower, but it was too far—my old man urged that; and I would have gone to the Zoo if it hadn't been too wet—which he also begged me to observe. But you wouldn't believe—I did put in St. Paul's. Such days', she wound

up, 'are expensive; for, besides the cab, I've bought quantities of books.' (*GB* pp.214-15)

Charlotte twice refers to the considerable expense incurred by her cab, reminding the Prince – and the reader – that it still waits outside. This fare is indeterminate; like Amerigo meditating his worth on his way to Cadogan Place, Charlotte has yet 'to settle' the amount. Like, too, the excess of coin bestowed upon Maisie by the Countess (which could also be read as Beale's way of 'settling' with his daughter, once and for all), the amount will be large. Since Charlotte's fare will effectively be 'settled' by the length of her visit, it directly bears upon the outcome of her interview with the Prince.⁹⁴ But the word is also applied in its legal sense to manage the question of relationships, as in the Colonel's ironic response to Fanny Assingham's summing up of various 'cases': "Are we to settle them all", he inquired, "to-night?" (*GB* p.53). Though Charlotte is not, any more than Amerigo, a tourist, (she knows London better than he does), her expedition is marked as a sightseeing tour, during which she defers to the advice of the cabman. Her comical appropriation of this figure as 'my old man' ironically suggests Mr Verver, her benefactor and much her senior, but with whom she will likewise have to 'settle'.

There are other connotations of witness and estimation at work here. Charlotte's hyperbolic, though relative estimation of her cab-fare—"more money than he has ever seen"—has its anticipatory echo in Maggie's approval of Charlotte to her father, as they in turn 'size up' her worth, her history. Maggie declares that, being older and able to 'judge better', she will 'see in Charlotte more than I've ever seen', and particularly – as befits a judge of character – her 'conscience', her being 'right' (*GB* p.128). Charlotte's reliability as a witness is also indicated by Amerigo on their 'prowl' about Bloomsbury. When she is struck by the man in the shop (who will later testify, as it were, against *them*), the Prince notes how 'her own vision acted for every relation [...] she recognised cabmen' (*GB* p.75). Here,

⁹⁴ Beale's half-hearted invitation to Maisie suggests such an attempt at bargaining: 'You can't say I 'aint kind to you or that I don't play fair' (*WMK* p.155).

Charlotte reveals that her excursion—avowedly inconsequent, so random as to seem ‘crazy’—has in fact consisted of a series of strategic tests, which she relates in the manner of a public statement, ‘proceed[ing], with lucidity, to the fuller illustration of it; speaking again of the three different moments that [...] had witnessed her return—for curiosity, and even really a little from anxiety—to Eaton Square’.

She was possessed of a latch-key, rarely used [...] ‘So I had but to slip in, each time, with my cab at the door, and make out for myself, without their knowing it, that Maggie was still there. I came, I went—without their so much as dreaming. What do they really suppose’, she asked, ‘becomes of one?—not so much sentimentally or morally, so to call it, and since that doesn't matter; but even just physically, materially, as a mere wandering woman . . . ?’ (*GB* pp.215-16)

In an ironic reversal of the line typically taken by prosecutors, Charlotte and the Prince use cabs and carriages to justify, rather than to prove, an event that will happen, as opposed to one that has. At once explicatory and probing, Charlotte’s cab is used both to ascertain certain facts about Maggie’s relationship with her father—‘I know as I haven’t known before the way they feel. I couldn’t in any other way have made so sure’ (*GB* p.215)—and to pose questions of her own. While it forms the basis for her interrogation of, and by, the Prince, her cab constructs a narrative of adultery without an event, as Charlotte demands to know ‘[...] *what* haven’t you had? What aren’t you having?’ (*GB* p.218).

The prospect of interrogation surfaces during another cab journey in the novel, when, driving back from the party at the Foreign Office, Fanny Assingham meditates upon her ‘mistake’ in arranging the Ververs’ marriage:

[W]hen their hired brougham had, with the long vociferation that tormented her impatience, been extricated from the endless rank, she rolled into the London night, beside her husband, as into a sheltering darkness where she could muffle herself and

draw breath. [...] She but brooded at first in her corner of the carriage: it was like burying her exposed face [...] in the cool lap of the common indifference, of the dispeopled streets, of the closed shops and darkened houses seen through the window of the brougham, a world mercifully unconscious and unreproachful. It wouldn't, like the world she had just left, know sooner or later what she had done, or would know it only if the final consequence should be some quite overwhelming publicity. She fixed this possibility itself so hard, however, for a few moments, that the misery of her fear produced the next minute a reaction; and when the carriage happened, while it grazed a turn, to catch the straight shaft from the lamp of a policeman in the act of playing his inquisitive flash over an opposite house-front, she let herself wince at being thus incriminated only that she might protest, not less quickly, against mere blind terror. It had become, [...] preposterously, terror of which she must shake herself free before she could properly measure her ground. (*GB* pp.275-76)

As Leckie has noted, Fanny Assingham's fear as to her part in, or knowledge of, an adulterous relationship, invokes the 'overwhelming publicity' of the divorce court.⁹⁵ Like the interlocutory vehicle of the trial, Fanny's cab is both treasonously responsive ('vociferous') and sensational ('produc[ing] a reaction'). The 'overwhelming publicity' Fanny dreads recalls the 'unlimited publicity' of Brivet's brougham, and the 'interminable' kind of 'litigation' at the opening of *Maisie* (*WMK* p.1), while the 'endless rank' from which her cab struggles to 'extricate' itself also analogically describes the fear and scandal whence Fanny herself 'must shake herself free'. Within this analogy, the word 'endless', like the words 'interminable' and 'unlimited', qualifies an unconscionable degree of publicity. In its direct application, however, 'endless' refers to the cab-rank, and thus assumes its literal meaning as an impossible (because baffled or defeated) attempt to estimate physical distance (Hyacinth Robinson's mysterious and seemingly 'interminable cab-ride' in *The Princess Casamassima*, for example (p.271)).

⁹⁵ Leckie, *Culture and Adultery*, p.186.

Mrs Assingham's anxiety registers not only the duplicitous space of the cab—which both harbours the knowledge of adultery ('a sheltering darkness') and admits the 'inquisitive' gaze of the court—but also implicates, as a measure for this anxiety, the cab journey's own length and circuit. The passenger's fantasy of 'incrimination' draws not exclusively upon the divorce court, but also upon the specific environment of the London cab journey, whose *extent* is directly connected to, and patrolled by, the city's disciplinary and surveillant forces. As Fanny 'fixe[s] th[e] possibility' of her arraignment, the movement of her cab, 'while it grazed a turn', and in relation to 'the straight shaft' of the policeman's lamp, describes a radius, reinforcing the 'police radius' that, customers were advised, monitored their vehicle's own.⁹⁶ Corresponding to James's description of his characters' logic – as that communicated by a 'rotary motion' – the cab formally acknowledges Fanny's disorderly (literally 'preposterous') 'terror'.

In each of the three cab journeys discussed in detail in this chapter, a passenger confronts an illumination that is also somehow opaque or concealing (Amerigo's 'dazzling curtain of light', Maisie's 'blinding whiteness [...] of light', and 'the inquisitive flash' of the 'policeman's lamp' upon Mrs Assingham, which causes her to 'wince' as from 'blind terror'). These journeys portend a kind of enlightenment: whether anxiously scrutinised, wished-for, or 'protest[ed] against', reinforcing the cab's associations with detection as well as mystery. There is not space here to explore the ways in which James's cabs make use of the detective story; a genre to which the cab's participation in movements from mystery to knowledge owed a good deal, and which James acknowledges, for instance, in 'The Papers' (1903), another tale that treats the anxieties of exposure (to be discussed in Chapter 4).⁹⁷

⁹⁶ As drivers were obliged to direct unruly clients to the nearest police station, the 'police radius' encircled the Charing-cross cab radius and was referenced in the same fare-book. The customer could also avail himself of the radius in the event of a disagreement over the fare (Dobraszczyk, 'Useful Reading?', p.125, p.126).

⁹⁷ The journalist Maud Blandy alludes to the fashionably mysterious cab when the disappearance of man-about-town, Sir A.B.C. Beadel-Muffet, presents an opportunity for her friend and fellow 'scribbler', Howard Bight: 'Who but he, [...] would have been so naturally let loose upon [...] the porter, in august Pall Mall, who had called his last cab, the cabman, supremely privileged, who had driven him – where? "The Last Cab" would, as our young woman reflected, have been a heading so after her friend's own heart, and so consonant with his genius, that it took all her discretion not to ask him how he had resisted it. She didn't ask, she but herself noted the title for future use – she would

However, James's use of transport to align social with formal relationships, presenting them thereby as quantities of knowledge or for enquiry, forms the basis for my next chapter on train journeys in *The Sacred Fount* (1901) and *The American Scene* (1907). In these texts, the challenge of defining, 'tracking', and containing 'relations' can likewise be linked to the railway's own economy. The limited visibility into which Amerigo's and Maisie's and Fanny's journeys taper, as each passenger struggles to ascertain the extent of distance travelled, also anticipates my discussion of James's particular concern with 'stopping-places'.

have at least got that, "The Last Cab", out of the business ...' ('The Papers', in *The Better Sort* (New York: Scribner's, 1903), pp.312-427, p.371).

- 3 -

‘Suffered Transfer’:

Train Journeys in *The Sacred Fount* (1901) and *The American Scene* (1907)

‘I revel in the thought of a dear old slow, stopping, American concatenation of cars, with boys shying packets of popcorn at one’s head—I gloat over it in advance. Therefore I will, most devoutly take the 1.38, & replete with my upstairs luncheon [...] give myself up to the study of scenery, manners & linguistics.’¹

‘Henry James is full of the railways.’² Whether as a Londoner, taking advantage of ‘the tremendous system of coming and going, [...] the elaboration of the railway-service, [and] the frequency and rapidity of trains’ to visit the countryside within his reach, or, having moved to Rye, advising his friends on the ‘super-excellent train[s]’ for visiting *him*, James displays a lifelong interest in the railway; a form of travel he finds stimulating and impressive, as well as practically and socially necessary.³ ‘I have a singular kindness for the London railway-stations’, he remarks in ‘London’ (1888). ‘I like them in themselves, [...] they interest and fascinate me, and [...] I view them with complacency even when I wish neither to depart nor to arrive’ (p.236, p.235). Of the modes of transport encountered in James’s fictions, trains depart and arrive with the most regularity and frequency. Adept manipulators of Bradshaw’s *Railway Guide*, his characters use all varieties: the Underground, the express, ‘the special train’, the Italian ‘snail’ trains ‘that go about the rate of an American funeral’, the ‘enormous’ American ‘*wagons*’ and ‘sleeper-cars’—equipped ‘with beds and lavatories’—and capable of ‘traversing [...] three or four hundred miles at a bound’.⁴ James’s

¹ To Howard Sturgis, 15 September 1904, *Dearly Beloved Friends: Henry James’s Letters to Younger Men*, ed. by Susan E. Gunter and Steven H. Jobe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.139.

² Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (Thames and Hudson, 1991), p.204.

³ ‘London’, p.234; To Mrs J. T. Fields, 5 September 1898, *HJL*, IV, pp.77-78, p.77. According to James, ‘[t]he good trains to Rye are the 11 a.m. from Charing Cross, & the 5.15 from St. Paul’s’ (now Blackfriars) (To Hendrik Anderson, 3 November 1900, *Beloved Boy: Letters to Hendrik C. Anderson 1899-1915*, ed. by Rosella Mamoli Zorzi (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), pp.16-17, p.16).

⁴ In *The Golden Bowl*, Charlotte organizes her tryst with Amerigo in Gloucester according to the timetable, joking at her better understanding of it: ‘It takes Anglo-Saxon blood!’ (*GB* p.257). In *The Spoils of Poynton*, Mona Brigstock and Owen Gereth hire a ‘special train from town’ for their wedding guests (*SOP* p.268); Caspar Goodwood complains about the slow Italian trains in *The Portrait of a Lady* (*PL* p.158); Gustave LeJaune and Edward Antrobus report on the amazing speed of American trains in ‘The Point of View’ (p.263, p.259).

Londoners in particular ‘know all about the trains’, exercising their ‘ingenuity about trains from town’ to respond to summonses of business or pleasure (*SOP* p.99, p.62), or to make a ‘rapid [...] jump, in the dusk of the afternoon [...] to a centre of festivity in the middle of Hertfordshire’ (say) for the purposes of a country-house visit.⁵ This ‘habit of constant circulation’ furnishes the author with an endless supply of narrative fodder; an infinite ‘variety of type’.⁶

As attested by the two texts examined in this chapter, James’s narratives themselves depend upon trains. Detailing liaisons between Londoners at a country-house party, *The Sacred Fount* (1901) treats a type of weekend recreation facilitated and encouraged by the railway. *The American Scene* (1907)—James’s record of his tour across the United States in 1904—is likewise significantly enabled by the Pullman train, whose network ‘blanketed the country [...] with as many as 9,800 cars on track [...] inaugurating continuous American transcontinental travel’.⁷

The interests and anxieties of travelling by train intersect with those of James’s fictions in less explicit ways. Articulating intervals, pauses, and delay, trains dramatize the liminal ‘in-between’ states that are freighted with particular meaning in James’s writing; itself shot through with a tension between stopping and onward movement.⁸ We might think of Maisie and Sir Claude lingering at the railway station in Boulogne, wanting to ‘impose an interval, indefinite, insurmountable’, while a train stands ‘waiting to start’ at the platform (‘It’s going—it’s going! [...] It’s gone!’) (*WMK* p.287, p.288), or of Strether finding the image for his untried youth in a train which, having ‘waited at the platform’, has at length departed, and whose ‘faint receding whistle’ he strains to catch ‘miles and miles down the line’ (*A* p.161). Noting the ways in which James’s late works are preoccupied with ‘the imagination of ending’, Oliver Herford points to the inconclusive finish of *The American Scene*, which

⁵ ‘The Liar’, *Century Magazine*, 36 (May-June 1888), 123-35, 213-23, p.123.

⁶ ‘London’, p.236, p.235.

⁷ Blair, *Henry James and the Writing of Race and Nation*, p.193.

⁸ Philip Horne observes that James’s fiction ‘thrives on the intervals between events, on the half-way states [...] in which dilemmas work themselves through or come to a crisis’ (Horne, ‘Henry James and Delay’, Introduction, in *Pardon My Delay: Letters from Henry James to Bruce Richmond* (Tunbridge Wells: Foundling, 1994), pp.7-14, p.7).

‘closes as James travels north by rail from Florida, deploring the progress of the railway across the flat American continent’. James appeals against the absence of a pause or a barrier in the train’s progress, ‘[y]et at the next moment he projects himself across the abyss of the approaching volume-end’:

this same criminal continuity [...] scorning its grandest chance to break down, makes but a mouthful of the mighty Mississippi. That was to be in fact my very next ‘big’ impression (*AS* p. 465).⁹

James’s own fascination with ‘the idea of connectibility’ (*MY* p.6) accounts for his incorporation of trains as part of his instinctive metaphoric register: drawing from a shared set of terms to describe both his own associative logic and impressions—‘the long concatenation of interlinked appearances’— and ‘the huge concatenated cars’ of the Pullman, for instance (*AS* p.440, p.72).¹⁰ For the author, the always intriguing possibility of ‘connexion’ is attended by concerns of being carried past one’s designated stopping-place; a sense also implicit in the word ‘train’ itself: ‘a thing that drags or moves something else’, from *treiner*: ‘to lure to a particular place or in a particular direction’ (*OED*).

In the last chapter, I discussed James’s use of transport to describe his inherently sociable principle of narrative relations, outlined in the Preface to *Roderick Hudson*. Cabs and carriages both invite and execute disciplinary circuits curbing these relations, which otherwise ‘stop nowhere’ (*LCFW* p.1041). This chapter considers how train journeys in James’s writing are made to dramatize the fluid and *unstoppable* aspect of such relations, and to explore issues of narrative continuity and sufficiency. As the cabs and carriages of *What Maisie Knew*

⁹ Oliver Herford, *The Style of Retrospect: Henry James’s Late Non-Fiction*, PhD thesis, University of London (2008), p.203, p.205. ‘[T]railing James’s “very next ‘big’ impression”, the last sentence looks forward to the second volume of American travel essays he planned to write but eventually gave up, the idea breaking down under the pressure of work on the New York Edition and the evanescence of his later American impressions’ (p.205).

¹⁰ This idea, for James, takes on ‘a wealth of suggestion; represent[ing] at once a chain stretching off to heaven knew where [...] one’s possibilities of life, and every link and pulse of which it was going to be indispensable, besides being delightful and wonderful, to recognize’ (*MY* pp.6-7). A ‘train’ most basically denotes ‘a series of linked [...] conveyances and related senses’ (*OED*).

and *The Golden Bowl* communicate the knowledge of adultery by way of a ‘rotary motion’, so the railway’s ‘constant circulation’ of people and goods provides an instructive context for the narrator of *The Sacred Fount*, likewise concerned with ‘the evidence of relations’.¹¹

As I will suggest, relationships operate in this novel in ways that implicate the railway’s own temporal and alimentary economy; as concerns of stopping, ending, and (ex)changing are tied to those of completion and sustenance. The train journey opening the novel foregrounds a preoccupation with these covert ‘liaison[s]’, determined through ‘a *transfer* of qualities’ (*CN* p.176 original emphasis). The word ‘transfer’ is particularly applicable in a railway context, denoting both the transport of freight – ‘the conveyance from one person to another of property’ (*OED*) – and the connection between two points (the passenger’s sense of changing trains).

The first half of the chapter considers how anxieties regarding social contact, and the distribution and sufficiency of ‘resources’, are equally associated with railway travel and at stake in James’s novel (*SF* p.52). The stimulating ‘reciprocities’ James finds catered for, and symbolised by, the London railway stations—‘[t]hey remind me of all our reciprocities [...] our energies and curiosities’—constitute dangerously uneven and untrammelled forces in *The Sacred Fount*, in which valuable traits are moved ‘from one to the other of the parties’ (*CN* p.176).¹² In his *Notebooks*, James describes the manner in which the ‘transfer’ between lovers takes place. ‘They *exchange*’: one growing younger as the other rapidly approaches senescence, another suddenly seeming witty as his benefactor becomes dull (*CN* p.176). The most precious of these sacrificed items is intellect, and, in keeping with the commodity whose loss and gain was habitually associated with rail travel, time. The question of influence is likewise linked to rail travel via the novel’s central conceit of the fount, which tropes fears of social fluidity associated with the railway’s own circulatory system.

Such anxieties are also prominently at work in *The American Scene*, where, from his seat in the Pullman train, James is perturbed by the sense of moving ‘*without* personal effort

¹¹ *The Sacred Fount* (London: Methuen, 1901), p.37.

¹² ‘London’, p.234.

or suffered transfer' (*AS* p.303 my emphasis). The second half of the chapter examines how this sense of transfer—of stopping and changing—is acutely missed by James in his later train journeys, and how the Pullman's innovative continuity in particular reinforces the problem of social and physical differentiation. The author associates the seemingly stop-less train both with the confounding of such distinctions, and with a culpable attitude of 'indifference'. As in *The Sacred Fount*, the rail journey's endless extent is linked to the threat of exhaustion and dependence, analogised through a captive clientele reliant upon 'queer refreshments' (*AS* p.433). The railway's monopoly over the consumption of food and literature is likewise troubling, with James deprecating its role as an arbiter of social, literary and critical 'taste'.

'Unstoppable Relations'

Though the railroad was scarcely a new technology in James's lifetime, its prodigious development over the course of the century made it an effective symbol of futurity.¹³ James recalls being impressed, as a child, by 'the then grand newness of the Hudson River Railroad [...] a modern blessing that even the youngest of us were in a position to appraise' (*SB* p.178). The author weighs his admiration for the new railway against a nostalgia for the historical riverboat, contrasting 'the thrill of docking in dim early dawns' with 'certain long sessions in the train [...] sessions of a high animation [...] but at the same time of mortal intensities of lassitude' (*SB* p.178). The small boy's conception of the network of railways expanding across America goes only 'so far [...] as its completion to Albany was concerned', with his tolerance and curiosity alternately tried and stimulated along the way.¹⁴

I must have known that discipline of the hectic interest and the extravagant strain in relation to Rhinebeck [...] an *étape* doubtless, on the way to New York, for the Albany

¹³ Edel records that when the James family left for Europe in 1855 '[t]he era of railroad expansion had begun; during their first year abroad 3-400 new miles of rail were laid' (Edel, *Life of HJ*, I, p.112).

¹⁴ As Peter Collister notes in his edition of James's autobiography, the Hudson River Railroad Company 'received its state charter in 1846', with 'construction work completed almost as far as Albany in 1851' (Collister, ed., *A Small Boy and Others: A Critical Edition* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p.23).

kinship, but the limit to our smaller patiences of any northward land-journey. And yet not the young fatigue, [...] but the state of easy wonder, is what most comes back: the stops too repeated, but perversely engaging; the heat and the glare too great, but the river, by the window, making reaches and glimpses, so that the great swing of picture and force of light and colour were themselves a constant adventure . . . (SB pp.178-79)

The journey's tensions and compromises are summarised by James's use of the word *étape*, indicating both a stopping-place ('un lieu d'arrêt') and a 'stage' ('un section de trajet'), and representing a pause that at once reaffirms and compromises the assumption of continuity. Such pauses are temporal as well as spatial in James's writing. In *The American Scene*, James remarks on his having 'been present, in the various connections, at the birth, the life and the death' of certain New York buildings and institutions, listing 'the complete disappearance' of 'a large church' on Fourteenth Street, 'the [author's] parental home', and 'the first home of the [Metropolitan] Museum [...] beyond Sixth Avenue', but inquiring—of 'the last-named'—whether there 'had [...] not been a second seat, long since superseded too, a more prolonged *étape* on the glorious road?' (AS p.190). The tension between stopping and onward movement pervades James's travelogue, which regularly exposes a discrepancy between 'continuity' as it refers to historical stability—'continuity, responsibility, transmission' (AS p.11)—and its use to indicate a seemingly endless, forward-moving trajectory, which, like the Pullman train's bluff and 'criminal continuity', is heedless of anything before or beyond 'the present, the positive' (AS p.44).

In James's autobiography, the railway 'of construction' (SB p.22) presents itself as an analogue for the accretive process of memory. The author's habit of remembering is characteristically sociable, but the journey to Albany is also prefaced by vivid recollections of actual 'kinship', and it is by association, 'los[ing] [his] mind in vaster *connections*', that James invokes the railroad (SB p.178 my emphasis).¹⁵ The train is also haunted by the

¹⁵ By the nineteenth century, the transport sense of 'connection'— 'the meeting of ... a railway train or steam-boat'—was in use (OED).

numerous and surreal ‘presence[s] of [...] incoherent Albany uncles’, who interpose themselves, offering James books to while away the journey, but ‘constituting by their presence half the enlargement of the time’:

I scarce know why, nor do I much, I confess, distinguish occasions—but I see what I see: the long, the rattling car of the old open native form and the old harsh native exposure; the sense of arrival forever postponed, [...] I see them always, the relatives, in slow circulation; restless and nervous and casual their note, not less than strikingly genial, but with vaguenesses, lapses, eclipses, that deprived their society of a tactless weight. (*SB* p.179)

The familiar yet faceless uncles, wearing ‘their hats slightly toward the nose’, roam the train: ‘they strolled, they hung about, they reported of progress and of the company, they dropped suggestions, new magazines, packets of the edible’ (*SB* pp.178-79). Both distracted and a source of distractions, ‘the relatives’ are at once ‘nervous and casual’, solicitous and careless. Their provision of reading as well as ‘edible’ material establishes them as direct sources of narrative interest—James recalls ‘having in my hands a volume of M. Arsène Houssaye, *Philosophes et Comédiennes*, remarkably submitted by one of my relatives to my judgment’, and it is also to a member of ‘this social trio’ that he remembers owing ‘my introduction to the *chronique galante* of the eighteenth century’ (*SB* p.179, p.180).¹⁶ Yet there is something faintly oppressive or excessive about their presence. Like the stops of the train, ‘too repeated, but perversely engaging’, the uncles are ‘too recurrent, to the creation of a positive soreness of sympathy [and] curiosity’ (*SB* p.179). Though relieving their young charge with occasional ‘eclipses’, the need for such pauses (to mollify what might otherwise be ‘a tactless weight’)

¹⁶ Collister notes that this is fairly heavy reading, ‘even for HJ, who had barely reached double figures’ (Collister, (ed.), *A Small Boy*, p.148). Houssaye’s Preface, written ‘in these days, when we live so fast, without thought of the passing breeze’, nevertheless recommends itself as the ideal material for a railway journey: ‘What is the use of this book? It is the work of leisure hours—the best hours; let it be to you, dear reader, the book of your leisure hours’ (Houssaye, *Philosophers and Actresses* (London: G. W. Dillingham, 1886), p.6).

suggests again the passenger's tension between interest and impatience. The uncles' constant movement—'always [...] in slow circulation'—corresponds to the train's deferral of a destination, suggesting a deficiency on the part of these relations, who are 'incoherent' in the dual sense of being both vague and incomplete. At the same time, their very appeal consists—like 'the charm of so much of the cousinship and the uncleship, the kinship generally'—in 'their so engagingly dispensing with any finish at all' (*SB* p.95).

Unstoppable relations, according to James, constitute the provoking interest of narrative itself, whose continuity invites the author onward by way of a sociable or sympathetic appeal. During the journey to Albany, 'the relatives' constitute this heartening impulse—'they cheered us on, in their way' (*SB* p.179). Yet they likewise hint at an anxiety—as to sufficiency, economy, 'finish'—that attends James's descriptions of his own compositional process. The 'hectic interest' by which, as a young railway passenger, James is 'discipline[d]', suggests, in its different application, 'the desperate discipline' of the retrospective author of *Roderick Hudson*, 'unduly tempted and led on by "developments"' (*LCFW* p.1040), while 'the fascination of following resides [...] in the presumability *somewhere* of a visibly-appointed stopping-place' (*LCFW* p.1041). Stopping is necessary for coherence, for it is through 'its own completeness', James notes, that a particular work 'seems at once to borrow a dignity and to mark, so to say, a station' (*LCFW* p.1039).¹⁷ During the endless rail journey, James's uncles' 'sustaining' interest and fondness is marked by 'lapses' and insufficiencies (*SB* p.179).¹⁸ In the same way, narrative 'relations' constitute alike a nourishing source of interest for the writer and a corresponding strain upon resources: 'whatever makes it arduous makes it, for our refreshment, infinite' (*LCFW* p.1039).

Questions of sociability, stopping and 'refreshment' are persistent themes of railway

¹⁷ As noted by Ford Madox Ford, the train journey lends itself to the idea of narrative sequence at the expense of conclusion: 'the constant succession of much smaller happenings that one sees, and that one never sees completed, gives to looking out of train windows a touch of pathos and of dissatisfaction. It is akin to the sentiment ingrained in humanity of liking a story to have an end' (*The Soul of London* (London: Rivers, 1905), p.61).

¹⁸ These uncles, Collister notes, were reportedly 'dissolute' and 'unreliable', taking up resources of space and time, as well as stuff (Collister, (ed.), *A Small Boy*, p.148). With implicit reference to their heavy drinking, James cites an 'inordinate' 'consumption' of 'Eau de Cologne' and 'neckties' (*SB* p.94).

travel, with their different demands upon the traveller's attention. The kinds of tensions which James identifies as particular to the train journey—the passenger's vacillations between 'high animation' and 'mortal intensities of lassitude'—are likewise resonant with the lure and danger of narrative 'continuity', which for the author constitutes both a formidable aesthetic 'principle' and an enduring 'trap':

He is in the perpetual predicament that the continuity of things is the whole matter, for him, of comedy and tragedy; that this continuity is never, by the space of an instant or an inch, broken, and that, to do anything at all, he has at once intensely to consult and intensely to ignore it. (*LCFW* p.1041)

In both *The Sacred Fount* and *The American Scene*, this attitude of 'intense' attention and detachment is represented by the figure of the distracted railway reader, alternately absorbed by, and studiously ignoring, his fellow passengers. These texts register the railway's impact upon social and narrative cohesion, invoking the 'predicament' of the traveller to dramatize authorial anxieties of influence and completion.

The use of the railway to evoke systems of social or familial connection is by no means an exclusively Jamesian idea. Nineteenth-century authors frequently resort to transport systems to analogise a sense of relatedness. David Bell draws attention to Balzac's use of the stagecoach to foreground the concept of genealogy in *Ursule Mirouët* (1841), noting how '[t]he structure of the transportation network [...] is closely linked to the question of family relations', while Jonathan Grossman identifies Dickens's anachronistic display of coaching in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), written as railways were making their appearance, as a strategy for evoking an exhilarating sense of contemporaneity and community: 'a manifold unseen connectedness'.¹⁹ Conversely, Nancy Bentley has shown how Edith Wharton's fiction demonstrates 'the mobile nature of modern kinship ties' as promoted by modern travel: 'The

¹⁹ David F. Bell, *Real Time: Accelerating Narrative from Balzac to Zola* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p.16; Grossman, *Charles Dickens's Networks*, p.6.

ability [...] to rapidly exchange closeness for distance and to combine estrangement with intimacy [...] Marriage and even blood relations are detachable, transplanted, improvised.’²⁰

James’s accounts of railway travel invoke kinship as a way of both illustrating and worrying the idea of narrative connection. For the purposes of a story, the train journey’s lapses in congruity have intriguing potential. In a Notebook entry of 22 January 1899, James jots down the ‘tip’ of an idea, contributed by Edmund Gosse:

[The] incident of the *éplorée* mourning widow, observed by narrating fellow-traveller in corner of carriage, who gets into train with relations of dead husband so sympathetically seeing her off, and then at next station with a changed aspect meets handsome gentleman, who gets in and with whom she moves into other carriage—with a sequel, etc. (CN p.171)

The widow’s ‘changed aspect’ corresponds to her ‘change’ of carriage, linking the stops and starts of railway travel with disruptions in narrative sequence; as well as with the relinquishing of ‘sympathetic’ for attractive ‘relations’. ‘Relations’ themselves constitute a frequent source of fascination in James’s trains. In addition to the tenderly ‘incoherent’ uncles roaming the train to Albany, there are the French children scoffing ‘omelettes’ and ‘little cakes’ whom James encounters ‘in the refreshment room’ at Vierzon station and who, with their voluble mother, pile ‘on top of’ the author in his railway carriage on the way to Bourges, and the ‘animated family’ who, while ‘journeying at some length in the State of Illinois’, James has ‘before [him] for a couple of hours in the Pullman’ and whom he finds himself regarding ‘with an intensity of interest’.²¹ James counts the incident as ‘a windfall [...] in my experience of “car life”’;²² a phrase he would also use to describe his conception of ‘The Pupil’ (1891)—a ‘thumping windfall’ he receives ‘one summer day, in a very hot

²⁰ Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas*, p.241.

²¹ ‘En Provence’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 52 (September 1883), 303-22, p.303; ‘The Manners of American Women’, in *Henry James On Culture: Collected Essays on Politics and the American Social Scene*, ed. by Pierre A. Walker (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), pp.82-115, p.95.

²² ‘The Manners of American Women’, p.95.

Italian railway-carriage, which stopped and dawdled everywhere, favouring conversation, [when] a friend with whom I shared it [...] happened to speak to me'. The subject of their talk—'a wonderful American family, an odd adventurous, extravagant band'—is instantly suggestive: 'I *saw*, on the spot, little Morgan Moreen, I saw all the rest of the Moreens; I felt, to the last delicacy, the nature of my young friend's relation with them' (*LCFW* p.1165).

The tip for 'The Pupil' foregrounds kinship as a model for the interrelating structure of narrative composition, as the contiguous Moreens exemplify how, in such cases, '[t]he whole cluster of items forming the image is [...] born at once; the parts are not pieced together, they conspire and interdepend' (*LCFW* p.1166). The family from Illinois, on the other hand, display such baffling vulgarity—chewing gum whilst discussing Wagner—that their departure, 'at a station that nothing on earth would induce me to name', leaves James with the sense of a world socially disjointed: the '*disjecta membra* of murdered Taste'.²³ The judgment recalls a phrase from *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), a novel in which the issue of 'taste' is also centrally at stake, and whose series of railway journeys attend the removal of treasures from a country house. 'The dreadful move' affects the heroine, Fleda Vetch, as a kind of dismemberment: 'she had cared for it as a happy whole [...] and the parts of it now around her seemed to suffer like chopped limbs' (*SOP* p.59, p. 83).

In *The American Scene*, such fantasies of disintegration register the partial representations of life glimpsed in transit. The disruptive influence of the railroad upon traditional locations and institutions is imaged by James's rebuke of the Pullman's unaccountable proliferation of stations 'that you scatter about as some monstrous unnatural mother might leave a family of unfathered infants on doorsteps or in waiting-rooms' (*AS* p.464). The impact of the railway upon society's own integrity is likewise troubling. '[A]s [he] move[s] about the country', James is struck by 'the effect of the American girl as encountered in [...] her [...] unrelated state':

²³ 'The Manners of American Women', p.96.

‘Ah, once *place* me and you’ll see—I shall be different, I shall be better; for since I am, with my preposterous “position”, falsely beguiled, [...] [b]y what combination of other presences ever am I disburdened, ever relegated and reduced, ever restored, in a word, to my right relation to the whole? All I want—that is all I need, [...] is, to put it simply, that my parents and my brothers and my male cousins should consent to exist otherwise than occultly, undiscoverably, or, as I suppose you’d call it, irresponsibly’. (*AS* p.431)

The position of the ‘exposed maiden’ in the absence of qualifying family members is comparable, for James, to that of the commercial travellers or ‘drummers’ that ‘b[ear] [him] company all the way to Savannah’. The problem is again diagnosed as one of context: ‘What was the matter with my friends was [...] that they were [...] just unformed, undeveloped, unrelated above all [...] They were not in their place.’ The travellers’ ‘unrelated’ state bothers James as an obstruction of narrative continuity; he decides that ‘[t]hey would fall into their place at a touch, were the social proposition, as I have called it, completed; they would then help, quite subordinately assist, the long sentence to read—relieved of their ridiculous charge of supplying all its clauses’ (*AS* pp.428-29).

This issue of supply is linked to the displacing effects of train travel, which confer ‘a sort of monstrosity’ upon its subjects. The isolated passengers appear ‘gruesome’ and ‘tragic’, distortions James finds most conspicuously evinced by the drummers’ eating habits: the way they are ‘ravenous’ for, and ‘inflated’ by railway ‘refreshment’, and subject to ‘strange sacrifices to appetite’ (*AS* p.425, p.426, p.427). As both a distributor of his own ‘special line of goods’ and a consumer ‘gorged’ by the railway’s fare, the ‘bagman’ is doubly reliant upon the train journey. James is to find ‘the breakfast-hour, from hotel to dining-car and from dining-car to hotel’ particularly haunted by ‘these so solemnly-feeding presences’ (*AS* p.425).

Railway travel foregrounds a similar thematics of displacement, disfigurement, and restless ‘feeding’ in *The Sacred Fount*, whose characters are alternately ‘bloated’ and beset by ‘thirst’ as a result of excessive, or insufficient contact (*SF* p.79, p.66, p.165). Like the passengers of *The American Scene*, whose relations exist ‘occultly and undiscoverably’ (*AS*

p.431), the mysterious partnerships under scrutiny in James's novel are 'wholly undiscoverable' (*SF* p.163).²⁴ For these characters, the American girl's complaint—that of the partial subject needing to be 'restored' in its 'right relation to the whole' (*AS* p.431)—likewise remains a pressing anxiety.

Strangers on a Train

James's novel opens at Paddington station, as the narrator, about to board a train for a country-house party, surveys the platform with interest:

It was an occasion, I felt—the prospect of a large party—to look out at the station for others, possible friends and even possible enemies, who might be going. Such premonitions, it was true, bred fears when they failed to breed hopes, though [...] there were sometimes, in the case, rather happy ambiguities. One was glowered at, in the compartment, by people who on the morrow, after breakfast, were to prove charming; one was spoken to first by people whose sociability was subsequently to show as bleak; and one built with confidence on others who were never to reappear at all—who were only going to Birmingham. (*SF* p.1)

The diverting inconsequence of encounters 'at the station' anticipates the 'ambiguities' that will preoccupy the narrator 'in the compartment'. Sharing a carriage with two other members of the house party, he finds that his companions waver between familiar acquaintances and strangers: 'a lady unknown to me' who turns out to be Grace Brissenden ('I don't think it's very nice of you not to speak to me', she remarks reproachfully) and a man whom he initially recognizes and seeks to avoid—'I looked for a seat that wouldn't make us neighbours'—but with whom he finds himself conversing 'quite as with the tradition of prompt intimacy' (*SF* p.2, p.3). Both are mysteriously altered. Gilbert Long, a good-looking bore, has grown markedly more astute and personable. Mrs Brissenden, who has married a man many years

²⁴ The narrator pieces together relations with the sense that 'the whole depended so on each part and each part so guaranteed the whole' (*SF* p.222).

her junior, seems herself to have become much younger. During the journey to Newmarch and over the course of the weekend, the narrator endeavours to identify the influences that have wrought such changes. While Mrs Brissenden appears rejuvenated by her marriage, her husband has extravagantly aged. Therefore, the narrator surmises, Long's newfound wit must likewise have its occult source, or 'sacred fount' (*SF* p.28).

The narrator's perplexing sense of both familiarity and strangeness with regard to his travelling companions indicates the ambiguous social climate of the railway carriage itself.²⁵ Such tensions, observes Wolfgang Schivelbusch, were reflected in the intimate and confrontational seating of European trains, residual configurations of the stagecoach that were uneasily incongruous with the railway's accommodation of strangers.²⁶ These differed from the rows of seats in American trains, which James refers to as 'benches' or 'pews', and which his American characters favourably contrast with the claustrophobic European compartment.²⁷ In 'The Point of View', Marcellus Cockerel thus compares 'the blessing of sitting in a train where I could move about, where I could stretch my legs, and come and go', with '[t]he villainous little boxes on the European trains, in which you are stuck down in a corner, with doubled-up knees, opposite to a row of people—often most offensive types, who stare at you for ten hours on end' (p.266). In *The Portrait of a Lady*, Caspar Goodwood similarly expresses his aversion to 'European railway-carriages, in which one sat for hours in a vice, knee to knee and nose to nose with a foreigner to whom one presently found one's self objecting with all the added vehemence of one's wish to have the window open' (p.403). Though designed with conservative natures in mind, the discrete carriages of British trains heightened the traveller's sense of an uncomfortable proximity with strangers.

²⁵ Matthew Beaumont identifies 'the compartment' as 'an uncanny place or *locus suspectus*. It is a space characteristic of modernity because it is structured by the most contingent of intimacies, because it is dependent on anonymous, accidental and strangely personal encounters in public' (Beaumont, 'Railway Mania: The Train Compartment as the Scene of a Crime', in Beaumont and Michael Freeman, (eds), *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space, and the Machine Ensemble* (Oxford: Lang, 2007), pp.125-55, pp.129-30).

²⁶ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p.73, p.74.

²⁷ 'The Manners of American Women', p.83.

This proximity foregrounds both the occasion for, and subject of, the railway narrative, which frequently concerns itself with questions of relation. A favourite occupation of Tilbury Tramp—the narrator of Charles Lever’s ‘The White Lace Bonnet’ (1845)—is to speculate as to the identity of his ‘fellow-travellers [...] whose peculiarities [serve] to while away the tediousness of [...] many an uninteresting journey’. Like James’s narrator, ‘Tilbury’ spends the journey sitting across from a charming and ambiguous man and woman, puzzling over ‘their vague but yet remarkable traits’. He allows his curiosity to precipitate ‘numerous hypotheses [...] but still with comparatively little satisfaction, as objections presented themselves to each conclusion’.²⁸

James’s narrator also shares with other narrators on trains an overriding interest in the effects of sociability: the ways in which people ‘ru[b] off on each other’ (*SF* p.16). The topic of ‘conjugal differences’ occupies railway passengers in Tolstoy’s *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), drawn into a debate as to whether, ‘[i]f beings differ from one another [...] according to their *inner life*, this will necessarily be reflected also in their *outer life*, and their exterior will be very different’.²⁹ In terms that anticipate the narrator of *The Sacred Fount*, the protagonists of Howells’s *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889), Basil and Isabel March, consider, from their seats in a Pullman train, the ways in which married partners ‘compensate’ for, or ‘supplement’ each other.³⁰ More pressing concerns of appropriation and depletion beset the heroine of Edith Wharton’s ‘A Journey’ (1899), travelling by sleeper-car with her dying husband and given to fearfully analyzing their estrangement:

Like two faces looking at one another through a sheet of glass they were close together, almost touching, but they could not hear or feel each other: the conductivity between

²⁸ Charles Lever, ‘The White Lace Bonnet’, in *Tales of the Trains: Being Some Chapters of Railroad Romance* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), pp.25-50, p.27.

²⁹ Leo Tolstoy, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, trans. by Benj. R. Tucker, 4th edn (Boston: Tucker, 1890), p.7, p.32.

³⁰ Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1889), p.45. ‘I suppose that’s one of the chief uses of marriage; people [...] form a pretty fair sort of human being together. The only drawback to the theory is that unmarried people seem each as complete and whole as a married pair’. HJ himself read Howells’ novel partly on a train, beginning its second volume ‘the instant I got into a train at Victoria, ma[king] me wish that both it and the journey [...] were formed to last longer’ (to W. D. Howells, 17 May 1890, *HJL*, III, pp.280-85, p.281).

them was broken. [...] The suddenness of the change had found her so unprepared. A year ago their pulses had beat to one robust measure; both had the same prodigal confidence in an exhaustless future. Now their energies no longer kept step: hers still bounded ahead of life, pre-empting unclaimed regions of hope and activity, while his lagged behind, vainly struggling to overtake her.³¹

The fantasy of exhausting or outstripping one's spouse (which employs the progress of the train to dramatize a failure of synchronicity) suggests the usurping 'energies' of Mrs Brissenden in *The Sacred Fount*, encroaching upon her husband's youth. Such anxieties of 'conductivity' or influence—the selfish or sacrificial pairings with which James's fiction often deals—are enhanced by the railway journey's conditions of enforced sociability; a source of dread in Wharton's tale, as the husband dies en route and the wife struggles to resist the interference of other officiously sympathetic or curious passengers. In another short story by Wharton, a pair of eloping lovers occupying a rapidly emptying train from Bologna long, contrastingly, for an intrusion. Their isolated compartment affords 'unlimited leisure' for contemplating their future, and the heroine reflects that 'it was another disadvantage of their position that it allowed infinite opportunity for the classification of minute differences'. As she moves away under the pretence of avoiding the sun and he buries himself in the *Revue de Paris*, the couple assume the attitudes of embarrassed or threatened strangers. In a predicament that feels quintessentially Jamesian, the heroine finds herself resisting an 'accumulation of mental energy', and vulnerable to an almost cerebral contact: 'Lydia's chief wish was that they should be less abnormally exposed to the action of each other's thoughts'.³²

The characters of *The Sacred Fount* are anxiously alert to this kind of abnormal exposure, not least in their efforts to avoid the narrator himself, whose 'intense obsessions' prompt Mrs Brissenden to denounce him, finally, as 'crazy' (*SF* p.193, p.278). As Matthew

³¹ Wharton, 'A Journey', in *The Greater Inclination* (New York: Scribner's, 1899), pp.27-48, p.27.

³² Wharton, 'Souls Belated', in *The Greater Inclination*, pp.83-130, p.84, p.85.

Beaumont observes, ‘train compartments make scopophiliacs and potential psychopaths out of us all’.³³ In the company of other railway-narrators (Tolstoy’s Pozdnyshv for instance), James’s commentator is disproportionately affected by the conditions of rail-travel:

I felt absurdly excited, [...] there had been in fact deepening degrees of it ever since my first mystic throb after finding myself, the day before in our railway-carriage, shut up to an hour’s contemplation and collation, as it were, of Gilbert Long and Mrs. Brissenden. I have noted how my first full contact with the changed state of these associates had caused the knell of the tranquil mind audibly to ring for me [...] and I could now certainly flatter myself that I hadn’t missed a feature of the road I had thus been beguiled to travel. It was a road that had carried me far, and verily at this hour I *felt* far. (SF p.126)

‘Collation’ is suggestive here, as a term which, in its various forms (‘collate’ or ‘collateral’) the narrator uses with some frequency. The word denotes interrelatedness: those ‘descended from the same stock but in a different line’, while ‘to collate’ is—like Maisie—to ‘bring [people] together’. A ‘collation’ also refers, however, to a ‘light repast’, reinforcing the novel’s association of travel with ‘contact’ and feeding.

The intensity of the narrator’s interest is also notable for its close and contrary association with distraction, suggesting the railway passenger’s alternating states of absorption and detachment. Simultaneously attentive and ‘beguiled’, he assures himself that he has been vigilant in the manner of the observant traveller who ‘hadn’t missed a feature of the road’, an analogy that feels inconsistent with his description of being ‘shut up to [...] contemplation’ of his fellow-passengers (as opposed to the passing scenery). The narrator associates the train’s progress with this unconsciousness, remarking, of his ‘meditations’, that ‘I was not [...] heeding much where they carried me’ (SF p.100).

³³ Beaumont, ‘Railway Mania’, p.129.

Throughout the novel, the phrases ‘carried far’ or ‘away’ (by thoughts or fantasies), ‘carried off’ (as a quarry or prey), or ‘carrying on’ (an intrigue or passion) are constantly in use, with their varying connotations of distraction, passivity, and aggression.³⁴ Both the narrator’s theory of influence and his own susceptibility to it *as* an influence are strongly associated with the train journey. Over the weekend, the narrator continues to refer his ‘obsession’ to his journey, regarding it as a tenacious fellow passenger encountered in travel, whom he periodically desires to shake off: ‘It was on my way to the place, in fine, that my obsession had met me, and it was by retracing those steps that I should be able to get rid of it’ (*SF* p.191). The prospect of sharing a compartment with the narrator makes other characters themselves twitchy. As the weekend draws to a close, the narrator interprets Mrs Brissenden’s vagueness about her time of departure as a hint against their travelling back to town together: ‘whatever train she should take in the morning, she would arrange that it shouldn’t be, as it had been the day before, the same as mine’.

I really caught in her attitude a world of invidious reference to the little journey we had already made together. She had sympathies, she had proprieties that imposed themselves, and I was not to think that any little journey was to be thought of again in those conditions. (*SF* p.189)

The narrator goes on to align these ‘conditions’— those of travelling in certain company— with the circumstances responsible for the transformations he witnesses in the Brissendens and Gilbert Long. Foreseeing that ‘I would equally get from [Long] the sense of an intention unfavourable to our departing in the same group’, he wonders ‘if this [...] wouldn’t affect me as marking a change back to Long’s old manner—a forfeiture of the conditions [...] that had made him, at Paddington, suddenly show himself as so possible and so pleasant’. Gilbert’s anticipated refusal to travel back to London in his company marks, for the narrator, a return to

³⁴ During her train journey back to Gardencourt— a return to ‘her starting-point’—Isabel Archer relishes the passivity of rail-travel: ‘She sat in her corner, so motionless, so passive, simply with the sense of being carried’ (*PL* p.492).

his former antisocial obtuseness, with the sociable act of travel itself a key to his ‘change’ and conversion: ‘If he “changed back”, wouldn’t Grace Brissenden change by the same law?’ (*SF* p.190)

This equation of the ‘conditions’ of travel with those of ‘change’ is established by the group’s initial train journey down to Newmarch. The narrator engages in separate conversations with each of his companions, taking advantage of the momentary distraction of one—when ‘someone [...] come[s] up to speak to’ Mrs Brissenden (*SF* p.5) or while Long is ‘occupied with a newspaper-boy’ (*SF* p.8)—to discuss the apparent transformation of the other. These exchanges take place at the station as the trio, ‘availing ourselves of our last minute, h[a]ng about the door’ of their compartment. Yet the narrator describes how ‘we journeyed together for more than an hour’ *first*, looping back again to the journey: ‘[W]e ran, as I have said, our course; which, as I have also noted, seemed short to me in the light of such a blaze of suggestion’ (*SF* p.11). This arrangement allows the narrator’s theory to coincide with the act of travel, to which it will persistently refer itself for the rest of the novel.

We had, the three of us, the carriage to ourselves, and we journeyed together for more than an hour, during which, in my corner, I had my companions opposite. We began at first by talking a little, and then as the train—a fast one—ran straight and proportionately bellowed, we gave up the effort to compete with its music. Meantime, however, we had exchanged with each other a fact or two to turn over in silence. Brissenden was coming later—not, indeed, that that was such a fact. But his wife was informed—she knew about the numerous others; she had mentioned, while we waited, people and things: that Obert, R.A., was somewhere in the train, that her husband was to bring on Lady John, and that Mrs. Froome and Lord Lutley were in the wondrous new fashion—and their servants too, like a single household, starting, travelling, and arriving together. (*SF* p.4)

The train journey foregrounds the tale's climate of both acute relationality and hectic dispersal, as Mrs. Brissenden's reported series of subordinate clauses introduce, connect, and 'bring on' the scattered house-guests-as-passengers. The telegraphic manner in which she 'was informed' suggests the railway's function as an information network locating 'people and things'. But it also anticipates the way guests will be apprised of relationships throughout the weekend, through constant reference to their journeys from town. Mrs. Froome and Lord Lutley's flagrantly adulterous liaison—'starting, travelling, arriving together'—is a case of such a pairing made coherent as well as explicit. Yet as Mrs Brissenden herself remarks, such arrangements are also deliberately cultivated in order to screen 'the real thing' (*SF* p.10).

At Newmarch, the guests refer the narrator to their travelling companions as a way of demonstrating or disavowing their affiliations. When Mrs. Brissenden challenges, not the existence of Long's lover, but the fact of their both travelling to Newmarch—'Does it necessarily follow that they always go about together?' (*SF* p.38)—the narrator's rejoinder, 'that he no more goes away without her than you go away without poor Briss' (*SF* p.39), hints at the correlative sustenance he believes she derives from *her* 'fount' of youth.³⁵ She replies by defensively emphasizing their separate travelling arrangements: 'his not having spoken to me since we parted, yesterday, to come down here by different trains' (*SF* p.40). As proof of 'Mr Long's tenderness of Lady John', meanwhile, Mrs. Brissenden points to '[h]is making her come down with poor Briss' (*SF* p.32), while at yet another 'juncture' the narrator finds Lady John herself reflecting that 'Grace had lent herself with uncommon good nature, the previous afternoon, to the arrangement by which, on the way from town, her ladyship's reputation was to profit by no worse company [...] than poor Briss's' (*SF* p.186). Happening upon Brissenden and Lady John sitting together, the narrator translates her gaze as a tacit, and disingenuous, appeal for detachment from a companion foisted upon her in travel:

³⁵ The narrator's insistence upon this alliance of occult with physical 'transfer'—'where he comes she does and where she comes he does' (*SF* p.40)—recalls the chiasmic rituals of *The Golden Bowl*, discussed in the previous chapter.

[S]he could trust me to believe—couldn't she?—that she was only musing as to how she might most humanely get rid of him. [...] She seemed [...] to refer me, for a specimen of his behaviour, to his signal abandonment of his wife the day before, his having waited over, to come down, for the train in which poor *she* was to travel. (*SF* p.101)

The narrator's attempts to coordinate and cohere these relationships also makes use of the train journey, rhetorically kept present as he 'follow[s] many trains and put[s] together many pieces' (*SF* p.166). He describes his logic in terms of 'lines' and 'connections', reporting how 'this [or that] connection hooked itself [...] into the array of the other connections' (*SF* p.254), or boasting at the rapidity with which he is able 'to re-establish all my connections' (*SF* p.203). The railway is both the literal source and the implicit analogue for these 'connections', as the narrator repeatedly refers to 'the station' as their starting-point: 'If my anecdote, as I have mentioned, had begun, at Paddington, at a particular moment, it gathered substance step by step and without missing a link. The links, in fact, should I count them all, would make too long a chain' (*SF* p.12).

The train journey foregrounds a broader preoccupation with junctions, for as Sheila Teahan as observed: '[t]he novel's topography is one in which chambers and similar enclosed spaces are joined by terraces, staircases, and corridors'.³⁶ Newmarch itself resembles a network of crossing train lines, or stations, with people meeting at the intersections of a 'carrefour', or 'collapsing' from fatigue to wait on benches (*SF* p.229). However, while, as Teahan notes, the train journey provides an analogy for the narrator's thought processes as a 'linear sequence', it also serves to emphasize their frequent disruptions of sequence, as the narrator describes how, 'with an impulse that bridged over an abyss of connections I jumped to another place' (*SF* p.228), or concludes proudly that, '[w]e had indeed taken a jump since

³⁶ Sheila Teahan, 'The Face of Decadence in *The Sacred Fount*', in *Henry James Against the Aesthetic Movement: Essays on the Middle and Late Fiction*, ed. by David Garrett Izzo and Daniel T. O'Hara (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), pp.109-22, p.113.

noon—we had indeed come out further on’ (*SF* p.243).³⁷ Such leaps in logic suggest the saltatory habits of the train traveller in ‘London’ (1888), making ‘the quick jump, by express [...] into the hall of the country-house’ (p.236). In ‘The Liar’ (1888), published the same year as James’s essay, the painter Oliver Lyons likewise finds ‘an exhilaration’ in such a ‘jump’ and ‘rapid change of scene’, which enables him ‘to see the spectacle of human life before him at intervals’.³⁸

The characters of *The Sacred Fount* are ‘people you see after an interval’ (p.21), glimpsed after indefinite lapses of time. In his own efforts to make sense of their changes and inconsistencies, the narrator finds himself on the other side of such intervals, wondering how to make the logical transition: ‘That’s what we start with, isn’t it? It leaves us further than ever from what we must arrive at’ (*SF* p.68). A sense of perpetual conjunction coexists with that of *disjunction*, evident in the alternative ‘combinations’—rapidly proffered and dismissed—of the narrator and other guests taking up the game. The alertness to ‘the universal possibility of a “relation”’ is destabilizing. As the guests at Newmarch are explicable only in conjunction, so the narrator envisages Lady John’s dismissal of his ‘train’ of thought as a radical uncoupling of all its component carriages:

Gilbert Long had [...] no connection, in my deeper sense, with Mrs. Server, nor Mrs. Server with Gilbert Long, nor the husband with the wife, nor the wife with the husband, nor I with either member of either pair, nor anyone with anything, nor anything with anyone. (*SF* p.186)

The inscrutability of ‘connections’ between houseguests coincides with an uncertainty as to their physical whereabouts. As Paul Giles notes, ‘[o]ne question that constantly perplexes the unnamed narrator [...] is how to “place” people’.³⁹ This difficulty first asserts itself at Paddington, as the narrator hints at Mrs Brissenden’s transformation to

³⁷ Teahan, ‘Face of Decadence’, p.114.

³⁸ ‘The Liar’, p.123.

³⁹ Paul Giles, ‘Deterritorialization in *The Sacred Fount*’, *HJR*, 24 (2003), 225-32, p.226.

Long ‘by alluding to my original failure to place her’ (*SF* p.5). At Newmarch, the guests are also in flux. May Server, who ‘used to be so calm—as if she were always sitting for her portrait’, is now ‘on the rush’ (*SF* p.74). When another guest, Ford Obert, is pressed to define how May has changed, he decides that ‘she can’t keep still. She was as still then as if she had been paid for it. Now she’s all over the place’ (*SF* p.62). Noting with unease May’s agitated movement between her male acquaintances, Obert remarks upon the ‘intensity’ with which, ‘ever since we came down, she has kept alighting’ (*SF* p.60), a habit which invokes the motions of a train passenger stopping at a series of stations. ‘Alighting’ takes on a nervous and aggressive suggestion, as Obert compares May to a ravenous bird of prey seeking a fresh ‘perch’ (*SF* p.18). The narrator is similarly disconcerted by May’s restlessness, commenting that ‘she was in the range of my vision wherever I turned—she kept repeating her picture in settings separated by such intervals that I wondered at the celerity with which she proceeded from spot to spot’ (*SF* p.91).

Social encounters at Newmarch are marked by this troubling ‘celerity’, and by a frenetic perceptual activity: ‘Everything always is [noticed]’, remarks Mrs Brissenden, ‘in a place and a party like this; but so little—anything in particular—that, with people moving “every which” way, it comes to the same as if nothing was’ (*SF* p.313). As he ‘leans for refreshment’ on an open window-sill—‘I felt its taste sweet’ (*SF* p.198)—the narrator summarises this state of both heightened attention and inattention, according to which ‘everything’ and ‘nothing’ is ‘noticed’, with the conceit of an unstoppable train journey:

One of [the thoughts] that passed before me was the way that Newmarch and its hospitalities were sacrificed [...] to material frustrations. [...] [T]he summer stars called to us in vain. We had ignored them in our crystal cage, among our tinkling lamps; no more free really to alight than if we had been dashing in a locked railway-train across a lovely land. I remember asking myself if I mightn’t still take a turn under them, and I remember that on appealing to my watch for its sanction I found midnight to have struck. (*SF* p.199)

The anxiety engendered by the ‘locked’ railway compartment is exacerbated by a prohibition against stopping; being without ‘free[dom] to alight’. Thoughts ‘pass before’ the narrator like images glimpsed from a train window, while the act of ‘appealing to [his] watch’—the typical gesture of the train passenger— indicates his obedience to the ‘sanction’ of both railway and fairytale time (‘midnight’).⁴⁰ The attitude of his fellow passengers, meanwhile, complacently ‘ignor[ing]’ the ‘lovely land’, contrasts the narrator’s mute ‘frustrations’ and ‘appeal[s]’ with an almost wilful indifference.

The narrator’s analogy, referring the peculiar conditions at Newmarch to ‘the material frustrations’ of train travel, reinforces a habit of his throughout the novel: a tendency to shift his frame of reference from house to train (or railway station) and back again.⁴¹ Observing Mrs Brissenden and Gilbert Long in conversation, he wonders if there isn’t something between ‘[t]hese two persons [who] had met in my presence at Paddington and had travelled together under my eyes’, reflecting that, after all, the opportunities for ‘social union’ were infinite: ‘Was any temporary collocation, in a house so encouraging to sociability, out of the range of nature?’ (*SF* pp.179-80). The comparison emphasizes the fleeting and arbitrary composition of the house-party, itself reliant upon the facilities of the railway. In *The English House* (1904), the architectural theorist, Hermann Muthesius, points to the increasingly fundamental role trains played in such gatherings, ‘due in great part to the new attitude to the country and to nature that has been made possible by modern conditions of communication, particularly the railways’. Whereas, as Muthesius relates, ‘[t]he large country-houses of the past were inhabited continuously, if not throughout the year, at least for most of it’, the

⁴⁰ In his discussions with Grace Brissenden, the narrator compares their efforts to ‘the messengers and heralds in *Cinderella*’ (*SF* p.258).

⁴¹ In his reading of this passage, Julian Cowley cites Michel de Certeau’s characterisation of the train journey as ‘a travelling incarceration’ as a formulation that ‘may provide clues to the nature of continuity between the modern mode of transportation and the narrative context provided by a seventeenth-century country house’ (Cowley, ‘*The Sacred Fount and Modernist Baroque*’, *HJR*, 18 (1997), 273-79, p.276).

modern rural retreat, or ‘weekend house’, was a site for temporary recreation.⁴² ‘[T]here is an obvious change in [...] the country-houses of Henry James’ (as opposed to those of George Elliot), argues Raymond Williams. They ‘have become the house-parties of a metropolitan and international social round’:

Social cultivation [...] is now a complicated process that flows from a wider society. Detached capital, detached income, detached consumption, detached social intercourse inhabit and vacate, visit and leave, these incidentally surviving and converted houses. An [...] indifference to real neighbours has become external and mobile [...] The houses are places where events prepared elsewhere, continued elsewhere, transiently and intricately occur.⁴³

This cycle of detachment, fluidity, and ‘consumption’ describes the encounters forged and dissolved in *The Sacred Fount*, relationships characterized by a process of vital exchange.

‘Terrible Fluidity’

The subject of influence is central to *The Sacred Fount*, whose titular conceit keeps the word’s etymological sense (‘to flow into’) present, and whose first-person delivery—a mode characterized, according to James, by ‘terrible *fluidity*’—betrays its weakness through the susceptibilities of its narrator: ‘apt to be carried away in currents that [...] sufficiently beguiled impatience’ (*SF* p.11).⁴⁴ Drawing attention to ‘the increasing recognition of fluids’ themselves ‘as objects of social technology’ in Victorian fiction, Jules Law cites the railway’s prominent association with anxieties regarding ‘social fluidity’. Thus, in *Dombey and Son* (1848), the symbolics of ‘rail and fluids’ coalesce around the wet-nurse Polly Toodle,

⁴² Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, trans. Stewart Spencer, 3 vols (London: Lincoln, 2007), II, p.118.

⁴³ Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.249.

⁴⁴ As Teahan notes, ‘the hydraulic trope of the fount’ is ‘repeatedly activated by etymological play on “influence”’ (‘Face of Decadence’, p.110); influence: ‘The action or fact of flowing in [...] said of the action of water and other fluids’ (*OED*). James’s reference to first-person ‘fluidity’ is from his Preface to *The Ambassadors* (*LCFW* p.1316).

sustaining the newest member of the Dombey family, and associated, through her marriage to a railroad employee, with the wider sustenance of society.⁴⁵

To and from the heart of this great change, all day and night, throbbing currents rushed and returned incessantly like its life's blood. Crowds of people and mountains of goods, departing and arriving [...] The very houses seemed disposed to pack up and take trips.⁴⁶

Michael Freeman remarks upon the frequency of this 'analogy of blood circulation' in the Victorian period, according to which 'the railway termini of London [...] were pulsating hearts within a "biophysical" system'.⁴⁷ Within this discourse, train travel became associated with the fear of pernicious transfusions. Novels like *Dracula* (1897), Law notes, 'evoke an entire complex of cultural fears about the transmissibility of character through bodily fluids and about vital characteristics'.⁴⁸ Law emphasizes the 'crucial' significance of *Dracula's* 'fluidity', pointing out that 'the salient feature about the Count is not simply that he is of an alien essence, but that he *travels*'.⁴⁹

Published four years after *Dracula*, James's novel has often been linked with Stoker's more literal vampires and vampire-hunters.⁵⁰ Both sets of characters are also 'train-fiends'. While still in Transylvania, Jonathan Harker finds the Count absorbed in Bradshaw's *Railway Guide*, and the Harkers in turn memorise and make use of timetables in their counter-effort to

⁴⁵ Jules Law, *The Social Life of Fluids: Blood, Milk, and Water in the Victorian Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p.2, p.44.

⁴⁶ Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1848), p.155.

⁴⁷ Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.142. In her analysis of *Dombey*, noting how '[t]he railroad, [...] emphasizes the increased circulation of commodities and bodies at mid-century', Laura Berry argues: 'The train represents the most frightening, and least resolved threat of the text—that one's self will be lost entirely in the disorienting world of public travel' (Berry, *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), p.83, p.87).

⁴⁸ Law, *The Social Life of Fluids*, p.148, p.154.

⁴⁹ Law, *The Social Life of Fluids*, p.160.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Teahan, 'Face of Decadence', p.109. Teahan also cites John Paul Riquelme as another critic who situates HJ's novel within its decadent context, in relation to *Dracula* and *Dorian Gray* (Riquelme, 'Towards a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 46 (2000), 585-605, p.110).

prevent Dracula's invasion of London. Dracula will also rely upon the Great Northern Railway to transport his 'horrid cargo' to different locations in London, generating a peculiar 'thirst' on the part of railway workers.⁵¹ Like the 'throb[s]' and 'currents' propelling the imagination of the narrator in *The Sacred Fount* (p.126, p.223)—suggesting the 'throbbing currents' of the railway in *Dombey and Son*, trains both analogise and practically enable the vampire's invasion.

In James's own 'train-haunted' texts (*AS* p.269), the railroad associates itself with circulations of ambiguous kinds. In 'London', the author enthusiastically connects 'the frequency and rapidity of trains' with the extension of 'the British Empire' (p.234) and 'our great common stamp of perpetual motion' (p.235). In *The Spoils of Poynton*, imperial plunder is managed with unnerving facility, as the Gereths' estate 'overflow[s]' with treasures whose circuit to and from Poynton, longingly followed by Fleda recalls their original displacement.⁵² *The Sacred Fount* displays an anxiety about origins as well as 'transfer', as James's vampires, like Stoker's, usurp intellectual and cultural, as well as physical resources. And in *The American Scene*, James links the railroad's progress to that of a fluid or 'tributary nation' (p.439), through which course multiple and competing social and racial strains. Anxieties of influence are linked to those of sustenance, as the author associates routes 'clogged' with midwinter traffic with a lack of 'circulation', and 'alimentation'; thoroughfares suggesting 'so many congested bottle-necks, through which the wine of life simply refused to be decanted' (p.87). Throughout *The American Scene*, the prospect of national narreplenishment is attended by the threat of depletion or insatiety, with the 'rattle' of New York traffic suggesting the movement, 'as of buckets, forever thirsty' travelling up and down 'the bottomless well of fortune' (*AS* p.4).

Within the compartment, as we have seen, anxieties of influence were likewise prevalent. The railway carriage is the site for both sympathetic and narrative exchange in

⁵¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1897), p.316, p.211.

⁵² '[A]s she came up to town [...] what she stared at from the train in the suburban fields was a future full of the things she particularly loved. These were neither more nor less than the things with which [...] Poynton overflowed' (*SOP* p.10).

Zola's *Lourdes* (1894), which describes the seemingly interminable progress of invalids to another sacred spring.⁵³ The passengers' contiguity is constantly emphasized, both in terms of the train's structure—'the whole carriage [...] formed but one moving chamber [...] which the eye took in at a glance from end to end'—and with regard to the unbearable length of the journey.⁵⁴ Trapped both within the train and within their own failing bodies, the passengers are physically conjoined by the 'neighbourly intercourse' of their 'low partition[s]', and mutually sustained by communal prayers and stories. Images of fluidity characterize the progress of the train and its passengers—'that human wave, stifling within the closed carriage which rolled on and on without a pause'—as well as the narrations they engender: 'a heavenly fount of hope appeared with the prodigious flow of those beautiful stories of cure, those adorable fairy tales'. Like those exchanged in *The Sacred Fount*, these stories pertain to 'miracles' of transformation, and affect their audience by way of sympathetic 'contagion'.⁵⁵

The pressures of sympathy and sociability occasion more literal acts of exchange in Maupassant's 'An Idyll' (1884), in which a wet-nurse and a labourer drain and sustain each other within their shared compartment; he 'drink[ing] at the living fountain', she declaring that 'it put life into me again'. The transfer assumes a dubiously practical context: she is uncomfortably full, he is weak from hunger. It takes place, however, following the discovery that the pair are 'near neighbours' with 'a number of mutual acquaintances'. The railway carriage affirms a sense of kinship between these strangers: 'They quoted names and became more and more friendly as they discovered more and more people they knew. Short, rapid words [...] gushed from their lips.'⁵⁶

Refreshment is a central idea in *The Sacred Fount*, whose characters suffer from a chronic and 'secret thirst' (*SF* p.165). In searching for terms with which to articulate his

⁵³ James refers to 'the wonder-working shrine' of Lourdes— as envisaged by Zola— in his essay 'Gabriele D'Annunzio' (1904), *LCFW*, pp.907-43, pp.928-29.

⁵⁴ Zola, *Lourdes*, trans. by Ernest A. Vizetelly (New York: Macmillan, 1897). The stopless quality of the journey is also emphasized: 'In other years the national pilgrimage halted at Poitiers for four-and-twenty hours [...] That year, however, there was some obstacle to this course being followed, so the train was going straight on to Lourdes' (p.42).

⁵⁵ Zola, *Lourdes*, pp.5-6, p.13, p.119. The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* also refers to the changes he witnesses as 'miracles' (*SF* p.28) and describes how his audience 'yielded to my contagion' (*SF* p.296).

⁵⁶ Maupassant, 'An Idyll', in *The Works of Guy de Maupassant*, 5 vols (New York: Bigelow, Smith, 1909), IX-X, pp.382-87, p.387, p.384.

theory, the narrator refers to foodstuffs and supplements—the intellect that Gilbert Long’s lover ‘administer[s]’ to him ‘as if it were cod-liver oil’ (*SF* p.10), and the fount itself: ‘an “awkward” dinner dish’ of which there is ‘not enough to go round’ (*SF* p.28). Throughout the novel, there is a pervasive interest and anxiety as to distribution: whether people are getting their ‘supply’, or where they have, alternatively, ‘lost equipment’ (*SF* p.28, p.190). Listening to ‘the flow of [Long’s] eloquence’, the narrator remarks upon ‘the phenomenon of his, of all people, dealing in that article. It put before me the question of whether, in these strange relations [...] the action of the person “sacrificed” mightn’t be quite out of proportion to the resources of that person [...] as if these elements might really multiply in the transfer made of them’ (*SF* p.52).

Trains were doubly associated with nourishment, both in terms of their monopoly over distribution and as a result of their notorious inadequacy in providing for their passengers during journeys. Simmons reports that the railway’s transport of goods in Britain, particularly ‘rail-borne milk’, had ‘dominated the market in almost every large town’ by 1880. ‘In one matter concerning food’, however, ‘the railways had an opportunity to render a service of their own that they deplorably missed. As soon as trains began to run over long distances they created a need for the provision of refreshments.’⁵⁷ Dickens records his impatience with this aspect of the railway journey: ‘What with skimming over the open landscape [...] I am hungry when I arrive at the “Refreshment” station [...] perhaps I might say [...] that I am to some extent exhausted, and that I need—in the expressive French sense of the word—to be restored.’⁵⁸

Like the American girl wishing ‘to be restored to [her] right relation to the whole’, ‘to be restored’—to bring back (a person or thing) to a previous, original or normal condition’, or more simply, to ‘take or put back into a place’ (*OED*)—indicates at once an

⁵⁷ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp.352-53.

⁵⁸ Dickens, ‘Refreshments for Travellers’, in *The Uncommercial Traveller* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1861), pp.76-88, p.78.

experience of transformation and return.⁵⁹ The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* conflates both meanings when, endeavouring to trace the source of his ‘intense obsessions’, he remembers ‘I was free [...] as I drove, in London, to the station’, and wonders if ‘on the morrow, in driving away, I should feel myself restored to that blankness?’ (*SF* pp.191-92).⁶⁰ Dickens’ use of the word to indicate refreshment, as a corrective to ‘exhaust[ion]’, links supply with displacement. The train journey’s associations with evacuation and supply underscore James’s novel’s own anxieties of reliance. In a letter to his sister-in-law, lamenting the ‘colossal Coal Strike’, and a consequent shortage of ‘the underlying motive force of all life & being’, James alludes to the vital support of the railways, emphasizing that the ‘real pinch for all of us’, would be if ‘the Railways, already cutting down their Services [...] shall—cease to be able to transport supplies. Then we shall all collapse from simple inanition’.⁶¹ These threats are cited in *The Sacred Fount*, as, casting about for the source of Long’s intellect, the narrator decides that ‘[w]e want the woman who has been rendered most inane’, and theorises with Mrs Brissenden as to May Server’s ‘suppositious inanity’ (*SF* p.73, p.98), or as to when ‘Gilbert Long’s victim [would reach] the point of final simplification’ (*SF* p.167).

Issues of restoration and sustenance are implied by the names of the novel’s two victims: Miss Server (whose surname suggests provision) and ‘poor Briss’, whose simplest complaint is a want of completion (literally an ‘enden’).⁶² The manner in which ‘Briss’ is cut short is also figured as an untimely ‘shortcut’, in a formulation which hints at the rigours of railway economy. In his 1888 essay on Maupassant, James considers this economy in narrative terms, citing the ‘special category’ of tales which deal with ‘adventures in railway carriages’ as indicative of the author’s admirable and modern brevity. James himself occasionally finds this concision extreme, however, citing examples of his having ‘eliminated

⁵⁹ James uses the word in its latter sense in a letter to Mrs J. T. Fields, advising her on the trains to London from Rye following her visit, and naming ‘[t]he 4.53 back’, as that which ‘restores you to Charing Cross at 7.39’ (to Mrs J. T. Fields, 5 September 1898, *HJL*, IV, pp.77-78, p.77).

⁶⁰ The idea of trains restoring people to places and to their former selves is also present in *The American Scene*, in which James refers to himself repeatedly as ‘the restored absentee’ (p.118); and in *The Spoils of Poynton*, where the word is used in ‘reference to [...] [a] wonderful exchange—the restoration to the great house not only of its tables and chairs, but of its alienated mistress’ (p.107).

⁶¹ To Alice Howe Gibbens James, 21 March 1912, *Dear Munificent Friends*, pp.84-87, p.85, p.86.

⁶² Teahan notes ‘the castrating apocope that truncates “Brissenden” throughout the text to “Briss” (Teahan, ‘Face of Decadence’, p.109).

excessively'. Characters like 'poor Mme. de Lamare' from *Une Vie* (1883), James notes, are 'described in very few of the relations of life', causing the reader to wonder: 'Had she no other points of contact?'⁶³ The description of 'any passage from youth to old age' is, in particular, a 'wholly absent element in M. de Maupassant's narrative'; an omission which suggests the baffling lapses of continuity of the railway timetable:

[H]is effort has been to give the uncomposed, unrounded look of life, with its accidents, its broken rhythm, its queer resemblance to the famous description of 'Bradshaw'—a compound of trains that start but don't arrive, and trains that arrive but don't start.⁶⁴

Susan Griffin and William Veeder credit Richard Altick with having identified the source of James's 'famous description' here—*Punch's* satirical 'Guide to Bradshaw' (1865) (fig.16).

After considerable labour, we divide all trains into six classes [...] The 1st consists of those trains which start and arrive. The 2nd of such as do not start, but arrive. The 3rd of such as *do* start, but *do not* arrive. The 4th of the trains whose departure from the starting point is subsequent to their arrival at their destination. The 5th of those trains which, neither starting nor arriving, yet manage to call at several station on their road. The 6th, which neither start nor arrive, but 'run.' The four first belong to the *Visibilia*, the last two to the *Invisibilia* [...] Apart from these classes are the *Meteoric* trains, which neither start, nor arrive, nor visit; but are absorbed.⁶⁵

⁶³ These 'relations' are both familial ('a daughter, a wife, and a mother') and temporal, constituting the explanatory facts of 'history' and 'experience' ('Guy de Maupassant' (1888), *LCFW*, pp.521-49, p.544).

⁶⁴ 'Guy de Maupassant', p.536, p.544.

⁶⁵ 'Guide to Bradshaw', *Punch*, 19 August 1865, p.64; *The Art of Criticism*, ed. by William Veeder and Susan M. Griffin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.230.

LONDON, MOTTLEBORO', WAITINGHAM, STOPFORD, PICKLES- WADE, DEPSTER, WAGTON, M'STER, WUMSLEY, COORT, BELLHAM, &c. N.W.

Gen. Man. (?) J. SMITH.]

[Supt. of Line, JO. MILLER.

Assistant-Supt., GRIMALDI, JUN.

(1) Don't pay any attention to this: a mere formal preamble.

(2) Abbreviation for Gentlemanly Man. Very kind of BRADSHAW to insert this gratuitous testimonial to the excellence of his friend, J. SMITH.

Miles from	Fares from			For Metropolitan Line, see page 25. (?)	(3) Don't pay any attention to this: it only goes into deep questions, and won't do you any good.									
	1 cl.	2 cl.	3 cl.		1, 2, 3	1, 3, 3	1, 2	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1, 2 ex.	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
0	0 6	0 4	0 2	Carryton Street Station.	mn.	gov.	mn.	mn.	mn.	mn.	mn.	mn.	mn.	mn.
0 5	0 3	0 1	0 1	London (?)	A	..	..	9 45	2 0	11 50	5 0	..	..	..
1 1/2	1 0	0 6	0 3	(?) This is clear enough.	For Local Trains see p. 186—Gov. to (83)	6 45	10 0	3 10	..	6 50	..	..	..	..
4	4 0	2 0	1 0	Horbury	Stop	6 50	10 15	4 0	..	7 0	..	..	..	..
10	9 0	3 6	1 3	Clay Green	On Saturdays only.	7 0	11 0	4 30	..	7 10	..	..	..	..
12 1/2	15 0	7 0	3 0	Pigwaldsen	3rd cl. to the north	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
14	20 0	10 0	5 0	Mottleboro' (86)	Stations remain at	..	11 15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
20 1/2	25 0	12 6	4 3	Waitingham (24)	Stopford all night.	2 55	11 30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
26	30 0	15 0	7 0	Stopford (57) .. { arr. dep.	Gov. to (83)	3 40	12 10	..	12 30	..	..	..	..	..
30	35 0	17 6	9 3	Pickleswade	(94)	1 30	12 30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
50 1/2	40 0	20 0	10 0	Depster 88, 89	(10)	2 10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
64 1/2	45 0	27 6	12 3	St. Swithin's .....	..	3 0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
69 1/2	50 0	25 0	14 0	Little Withem 102, 30 } 51, 79, 3 }	..	3 15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
90 1/2	63 0	31 6	15 2	Smalsborough .....	..	4 10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
100	71 0	35 6	17 3	Medwystone 55, 66 .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
102	80 0	40 0	20 0	Finch 44 .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
120 1/2	100 0	50 6	25 0	Migdale .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
160	160 0	80 6	40 3	Wagton .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
180	170 0	90 0	45 5	Messford .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
264	260 0	108 0	83 0	Nark 89, 90, 100, 99 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
273	210 0	105 0	46 0	M'ster .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	82 0	Wumsley 60, 46, 1, 10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	Coort .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	Langton 11, 88 .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	Pellertham .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	Bellham .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Figure 16: 'Guide to Bradshaw'

These illogical, vanishing, or strangely 'absorbent' trains have the same piecemeal inconsistency as the relationships in *The Sacred Fount* (with the exception of Mrs Froome and Lord Lutley—'starting, travelling, and arriving together' (p.4)). James's analogy for the abbreviated sense of 'passage' afforded by Maupassant's characters anticipates his own narrator's reaction to the suddenly aged and rejuvenated Brissendens.⁶⁶ While waiting for their train to start, the narrator and Gilbert Long discuss the unaccountable transformation of

⁶⁶ 'The popular notion is that Bradshaw's Railway Guide, with its endless list of stations, maze of figures, and whimsical array of dots, asterisks, daggers, and double daggers [...] is a bewildering publication beyond the ordinary understanding, and calculated to exasperate the average passenger to the verge of lunacy' (John Pendleton, 'The Romance of a Time Table', *Good Words*, 46 (December 1905), 220-23, p.220).

Mrs Briss. Rather than growing younger, Long argues, ‘her clock has simply stopped’ (*SF* p.6). The narrator cheerfully responds by remarking on the luck ‘that, with Brissenden so [...] relegated to the time-table’s obscure hereafter, it should be you and I who enjoy her!’ (*SF* p.7). The qualifying of the timetable as ‘obscure’ suggests a jocular allusion to the puzzlements of Bradshaw’s *Guide*, but the narrator’s words prove portentous as, on arrival at Newmarch, he is struck by Brissenden’s excessively aged appearance. Like ‘poor Mme. de Lamare’, whose ‘passage from youth to old age’ is ‘wholly absent’, the inexplicably ‘advanced ‘years’ of ‘poor Briss’—as he is habitually denominated—are figured as an unfeasibly fast journey: ‘They were there without having had time to arrive. It was as if he had discovered some miraculous short cut to the common doom’ (*SF* p.20). The phrase nearly resembles another of James’s reflections on Maupassant: ‘If it be a miracle whenever there is a fresh tone, the miracle has been wrought for M. de Maupassant. Or is he simply a man of genius to whom short cuts have been disclosed in the watches of the night?’⁶⁷

Such ‘shortcuts’ impact the story’s formal, as well as temporal consistency, as the conceit of the timetable in James’s essay points to the reader’s baffled expectation of narrative ‘arrangement’. ‘Poor Briss’ suffers both from an insufficiency (of youth) and an excess (of time), suggesting at once the kind of inexplicable elisions *Punch* draws attention to in Bradshaw’s *Guide*—the ‘Abbreviation for Gentlemanly Man’ (*Gen. Man*) for instance—and the accumulated weight of superannuation: ‘the way he had piled up the years’ (*SF* p.20). Nicolas Daly has shown how a ‘time-consciousness’ brought about by the railway could thus impede a sense of human development: ‘The railway traveller was even perceived to age more quickly, as if he or she were getting an overdose of time.’⁶⁸

⁶⁷ ‘Guy de Maupassant’ (1888), p.533.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.46. A significant, and delayed, impact of the railways was their effect upon time. Though the timetable had been in existence since the 1820s, and standardised time, as a result of the Great Western Railway, since 1840, what would become known as ‘railway time’ did not take practical effect until the 1880s. As a result, trains continue to evince a certain ‘time-consciousness’ in James’s fictions. Pointing out ‘the extent to which clock-watching was, in various forms, an urgent enterprise in the decades spanned by [James’s] career’, Deirdre Lynch cites ‘the intimate knowledge of train schedules [...] that will enable the adulterers to synchronize their stolen moments’ (Lynch, ‘Time’, in *Henry James in Context*, pp.332-42, p.333, p.332).

The inconsistencies observed by James's narrator in other characters are refracted in his own attempts to tell his story, as his endless series of connections—making 'too long a chain' (*SF* p.12)—preclude the possibility of completion. The fault was attributed to both the narrator and to James himself by readers of the novel, who themselves latched onto rail idioms to trope a sense of stoplessness allied with that of insufficiency. Complaining that the narrator 'uses his hypothesis merely as a means of showing to what prodigious lengths the analytical mind can go', a reviewer for the *Academy* observed that 'in every word or action of his fellow-creatures he perceives motives that, like the lines on a railway siding, have no beginning and no end'.⁶⁹ Another American reviewer regretfully contrasted the seemingly secure 'English railway carriage' with which the novel begins—'one of Henry James's good beginnings' and, unlike an American railcar 'not a thing to fall in or out of'—with the fragmented and open-ended departures of the story.⁷⁰

At its most basic level, Teahan notes, 'James's formulation about a transfer of qualities comes close to a definition of metaphor itself: an etymological transfer or carrying over of properties from one entity to another'.⁷¹ Her discussion includes the train journey opening the novel as part of this reflexive preoccupation with the figurative; but the distinctive associations of rail transport, I have suggested, also lend themselves to the novel's system of 'transfer' in more specific ways. Primarily a freight vehicle, the railway's dominant role in the transport of heavy goods and in distributing supplies supports a narrative fixation with burdens, with being carried, and with being sustained. The association of passengers with goods—Gilbert Long is 'a fine piece of human furniture' (*SF* p.2), for instance—is also a prevalent anxiety of rail travel. Like the interrelationships of James's novel, the railway involved its clientele in a reciprocal relationship of supply and demand.

The treatment of characters as fungible commodities is both a modern capitalist idea and a timeless narrative one; the stuff of parable and fairytale that James's novel strongly invokes. In James Anthony Froude's dream-allegory, 'A Siding at a Railway Station' (1879),

⁶⁹ Hayes, *The Contemporary Reviews*, pp.342-43, p.342.

⁷⁰ Hayes, *The Contemporary Reviews*, pp.354-55, p.354.

⁷¹ Teahan, 'Face of Decadence', p.112.

a train full of passengers from widely different social and economic groups are turned out onto the platform in the middle of their journey and instructed to reveal the contents of their luggage, in which their histories, and various vices and virtues, are displayed. Under trial by the stationmaster, the motley group of passengers (from archbishops to artisans to thieves) plead for a second attempt at life: ‘All that they asked was that they should be put in a new position, and that the adverse influences should be taken off’. They are accordingly transformed—‘the alterations were rapidly made’—and sent (both transmuted and made to resume their journey) into different occupations and identities: ‘The cup of Lethe was sent round. The past became a blank. They were hurried into the train; the engine screamed and flew away with them.’ The stationmaster explains to the narrator that the journey represents a kind of perpetual circuit, a narrative on a continuous loop:

‘They will be all here again in a few years [...] and it will be the same story over again. I have had these very people in my hands a dozen times. They have been tried in all positions, and there is still nothing to show [...] Some of the worst I have known made at last into pigs and geese, to be fatted up and eaten, and made of use in that way...’⁷²

The passengers’ collective amnesia—draining ‘the cup of Lethe’—suggests the unconsciousness of the railway traveller asleep or reading (at the end of the tale, the narrator awakes in his carriage to find he has dreamt its events). Imbibing—and becoming—fluid, the characters thus literalise a kind of narrative ‘solution’, melting together into a common fund of matter to be redistributed. The pun is made by the narrator of *The Sacred Fount*, rejecting theories which prove ‘insoluble to the whole’ (*SF* p.185). His own participatory ‘immersion’ likewise uses up the resources of his victims: ‘I remember feeling seriously warned [...] not to yield further to my idle habit of reading into mere human things an interest so much deeper than mere human things were in general prepared to supply’ (*SF* p.155). Conflating what

⁷² James Anthony Froude, ‘A Siding at a Railway Station’, in *Historical and Other Sketches*, ed. by David H. Wheeler (New York: Funk & Wagnalis, 1885), pp.41-62, p.53, p.54.

these characters are ‘prepared to supply’ (in the way of facts to support his narrative) with their more vital ‘supply’ (of traits to and from each other), the narrator implicitly includes ‘reading’ itself as an item of consumption or exchange.

‘Criminal Continuity’

Towards the end of *The American Scene*, James ‘measure[s] with dismay the trap laid by the scale, [...] by the superstition, of continuity’, and relates the Pullman train’s ‘vast [...] indifference’ to its unstoppable progress: ‘Oh for a split or a chasm, one groans beside your plate-glass, oh for an unbridgeable abyss or an insuperable mountain!’ The narrator’s ‘slanging’ of the railcar’s ‘criminal continuity’ reinforces the association, throughout his commentary, of the seemingly stop-less train journey with a moral, social and critical ‘indifference’ (*AS* p.465). The word encapsulates both the impossibility of differentiating between elements in the American social and physical landscape, and the culpable attitude of ‘not “caring”’ (*AS* p.397) this difficulty expresses and results from.

James asserts both senses of ‘indifference’ in ‘The Manners of American Women’ (1907), describing ‘a scant impression [...] gathered [...] in the course of a run from Boston down to the further South Shore’. The author’s attention is caught by ‘a bevy’ of schoolgirls who take ‘vociferous possession of the car’—‘calling giggling, changing, treating the great dusty public place [...] quite as their playground or maiden-bower’ (p.82). Among his imperturbable fellow passengers, James alone is ‘awestruck’ by this display. ‘Indifference’ describes the collective attitude and response of ‘the crowded indifferent car’; the author’s noting ‘that my incident appeared to excite, amid the indifference, no shade of remark’ (p.83). James also puns on the word’s secondary sense, however, as the train’s diverse yet indistinct group of passengers dramatize the contradiction of a ‘society inordinately addicted to rushing about by rail’, and everywhere apparent in the American scene: ‘the fact that there immeasurably more than elsewhere sets of persons are intermixed and confounded’ (p.87). This confusion, suggesting paradoxically an ‘apparent disconnectedness of classes and groups’ (p.88), describes at once a logic of detachment and mingling.

James makes further use of this ambiguity within 'indifference' as a category of social or aesthetic response. Unpicking the word as 'a key term in Pater's aesthetics', Kevin Ohi points out that it 'condenses two apparently contradictory' meanings: '[I]ndifference can mean both "non-difference" and "apathy". Thus, it indicates, alternately, a (person's or artwork's) aloofness or refusal of engagement and an eroticized communion or merger'.⁷³ Referring both to an (anti) social attitude and to a sociability threatening to selfhood—'to a blurring or undoing of identity and to the charisma exerted by the absolutely self-sufficient'—'indifference' suggests the mixture of attention and detachment that characterised conditions of sociability within the railway carriage.

The social problem of 'indifference'—'a matter of suppressed transitions'—inflects James's description of the Pullman railcar itself as he moves across different states and regions, wondering at '[t]his absence of the need of losing touch'.⁷⁴ From his seat by 'the eternal car window', James is disconcerted by how '[g]radations, transitions, differences of any sort, temporal, material, social, [...] shrank somehow [...] to negligible items; and one had perhaps never yet seemed so to move through a vast simplified scheme' (*AS* pp.305-06). The Pullman's continuity was in fact unprecedented, as the leading variety of what became known as the 'through train'. As Sarah Gordon notes: 'Gone were spontaneous stops for food or a view; unplanned stops for fuel and water; passengers who might jump on and off in the middle of the journey [...] Gone were engineers and conductors who could decide for themselves when to start or stop the train'. With 'the adoption of standard gauge track, Pullmans could be shuttled from one line to another', eliminating the need for passengers to make the transfer themselves.⁷⁵ Joseph Husband's laudatory *Story of the Pullman Car* (1917) returns persistently to this virtue, tracing 'the beginning of the vast system which today embraces the entire country and makes possible continuous and luxurious travel over a large number of distinct railroads'. These 'luxurious cars of uniform construction' were 'adapted to

⁷³ Kevin Ohi, *Innocence and Rapture: The Erotic Child in Pater, Wilde, James, and Nabokov* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.15.

⁷⁴ 'The Manners of American Women', p.88; *AS* p.72.

⁷⁵ Sarah H. Gordon, *Passage to Union: How the Railroads Transformed American Life, 1829-1929* (Chicago: Dee, 1996), p.289.

both night and day requirements', allowing 'the travelling public' to move 'without change between distant points, and over various distinct lines of railroads'.⁷⁶

For James, the traveller's lack of agency, by turns pleasurable and disturbing, finds its supreme expression in the Pullman train: 'he had but to sit still in his portentous car, had but to exercise a due concentrated patience, [...] without personal effort or suffered transfer' (*AS* p.303). Writing to Jessie Allen about the prospect of 'moving southward', James declares that 'I have only to sit (and *lie*) in my train, *from* here, long enough, and I slide into full tropical splendour'.⁷⁷ In another letter to Allen, he concedes that 'the journeys, the long ones, are wonderfully comfortable (for feeding, sitting and all luggage arrangements [...]) so "booked through"—through and through and so *safe*)'.⁷⁸

Despite the practical conveniences of such a system, James was discomfited by 'the absence of friction' generated by the railcar (*AS* p.310). As John Stilgoe observes: 'Trains had changed since he had visited the United States a quarter century before; in 1907 the Pullman glided too quickly, too smoothly'.⁷⁹ Continuous travel over such long distances was itself alarming. 'I shall never again attempt a journey of that confined & cooped-up continuity', James declares in a letter to his sister-in-law, Alice James, after several hours of travelling 'through unspeakable alkali deserts, [with] all the Pullman civilization, & its human products, that clattered & chattered along with me'.⁸⁰ To Edith Wharton from Biltmore, North Carolina, James announces his intention 'to run down to Palm Beach and then *straight* back from there (with appalling continuity) to Boston'.⁸¹ And again, writing from Saint Louis, he informs his brother that he will 'leave Chicago [...] and then get to Los Angeles [...] by the straightest most comfortable road I can (probably giving up New Orleans—the journey thence, to Los Angeles through the illimitable Texas etc. seeming so stopless and so appalling)'.⁸²

⁷⁶ Joseph Husband, *The Story of the Pullman Car* (Chicago: McClurg, 1917), p.35, p.48, p.74.

⁷⁷ To Jessie Allen, 16 January 1905, *HJL*, IV, pp.338-40, p.340.

⁷⁸ To Jessie Allen, 22 October 1904, *HJL*, IV, pp.328-30, p.330.

⁷⁹ John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p.249.

⁸⁰ 24 March 1905, *Dear Munificent Friends*, pp.53-54, p.53.

⁸¹ To Edith Wharton, 8 February 1905, *HJL*, IV, pp.350-53, p.347.

⁸² To William James, 8 March 1905, *HJL*, IV, pp.353-54, p.354.

There were reasons beyond those of physical fatigue for finding the ‘stopless’ course of the Pullman ‘appalling’. As Ross Posnock has observed, by James’s arrival in 1904, ‘the term Pullman’ refer[red] to more than a mere train’, having ‘become a synonym for ambitious social engineering’.⁸³ Stopping has a more general moral and aesthetic value for James, however, whose distrust of ‘the trap laid by the superstition of continuity’ accounts for his otherwise incongruous satisfaction when the Pullman breaks down (a rare moment of ‘unpremeditated transfer’ (*AS* p.398)). Throughout *The American Scene*, James associates the need for material gaps and pauses with civility, complaining that ‘quiet interspaces [...] exist no more in [the] structural scheme’ of a skyscraper ‘than quiet tones, blest breathing-spaces, occur, for the most part, in New York conversation’. ‘[T]he reason’, James concludes, is ‘that the building can’t afford them’, and ‘[i]t is by very much the same law, one supposes, that New York conversation cannot afford stops’ (*AS* p.95). In ‘The Manners of American Women’, James makes the stopping of the train a point of etiquette, relating his abrupt treatment at the hands of the railroad conductor. This train, unlike the specialized Pullman, is ‘all of ordinary cars’, and so ‘stopped at each station’:

As our stops were to be many the station precedent to my place of descent had been mentioned to me, and, [...] I bethought myself at a given moment, with the brakeman’s call in my ears, that we must have just passed it. The conductor making his way, however, a minute later, through the aisle, I put him my little question from my pew: would my station (which I named) be our next arrest? He desired apparently to show that this weak overture deserved as little notice as possible, [...] and he put me in my place with a grunted, stinted, unsupplemented ‘No’ that made an effectual end, for the time, of the brief relation with him that I had rashly attempted to form [...] He would consent, clearly, to no relation whatever ... (p.83)

⁸³ Ross Posnock, *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.283.

The conductor's response lacks both 'the auspicious start' and 'the happy conclusion' that would have made a 'relation' possible, for as James goes on to emphasize: 'A relation is complete [...] when it has begun, has continued, and has ended.' James ironically contrasts 'the effectual end' determined by the conductor with his own sense of the exchange as ineffectual ('unsupplemented'). And this 'want of finish'—of social polish, but also of adequate ending—aligns itself with the passenger's uncertainty regarding the train's own progress, and with the conductor's barely deigning to tell James *where* to stop: 'He had not let me ride on and miss my connection without notifying me—it appearing to be implied that he would have had a perfect right to do this if so disposed.' The same indifferent continuity characterizes the rest of the passengers James imagines calling to witness this disregard for social niceties: '“We propose,” the whole carful might have been saying to me straight, “to get on virtually without the confounded things ...”' (p.85).

James is particularly indulgent of train-stops, which afford opportunities for observing scenery without and people within.⁸⁴ It is in seeking some 'notation of manners' that the author of *The American Scene* avails himself, 'as I jogged southward, from Boston', of 'a train that stopped and stopped again, for my fuller enlightenment' (p.36). Passing through Chenonceaux, James remarks that the trains have a 'desultory, dawdling, almost stationary quality, which makes them less of an offence than usual', and between Tours and Le Mans, cheerfully endures such 'dawdling' for its picturesque opportunities: '[t]he train stopped every five minutes; but, fortunately, the country was charming,—hilly and bosky [...] and dotted here and there with a smart little chateau'.⁸⁵ Railway stations, platforms, and carriages provide the author with ample opportunities for people-watching. In 'the express' from Marseilles, 'full to overflowing' with passengers, James is obliged to keep his gaze inside the train while occupying a seat 'in a carriage laden with Germans, who had command of the windows, which they occupied as strongly as they have been known to occupy other

⁸⁴ In 'London', James recalls 'pottering up to London in the slowest of Sunday trains, [...] an interruptedness which might have been tedious without the conversation of an old gentleman who shared the carriage with me' (p.219).

⁸⁵ 'En Provence', *Atlantic Monthly*, 52 (August-September 1883), 169-86; 303-22, pp.177-78, p.310.

strategical positions'.⁸⁶ Catching a train from Tours 'in the early days of October', James witnesses 'the whole *jeunesse* of the country [...] going back to school', an occasion which 'fills the trains with little pale-faced *lycéens*, who gaze out of the windows with a longing, lingering air'.⁸⁷ And even the 'detestable little railway' in the Isle of Wight:

stops at half a dozen little stations where the groups on the platform enable you to perceive that the population consists almost exclusively of gentlemen in costumes suggestive of unlimited leisure for attention to cravats and trousers [...] of old ladies of the species denominated in France *rentières*, of young ladies of the highly educated and sketching variety.⁸⁸

James's own 'leisure for attention' is not 'unlimited', but subject to the train's discipline (a frequent complaint in touring America, where rapid transit has 'made mincemeat of the rights of contemplation' (*AS* p.148)). Like the 'tips' from which his stories evolve, the author derives satisfaction from the train-stop's very brevity, whose truncated experience is the more suggestive in proportion to the quantity of impressions it yields. Thus James would regard his few minutes at Savannah station in terms of both insufficiency and plenitude: 'I recall my fleeting instants [...] as the taste of a cup charged to the brim' (*AS* pp.429-30).

It was absurd what I made of Savannah—which consisted for me but of a quarter of an hour's pause of the train under the wide arch of the station, where [...] a bright, brief morning party appeared of a sudden to have organized itself. Where was the charm?—if it wasn't already, supremely, in the air, the latitude, the season, as well as in the imagination of the pilgrim capable not only of squeezing a sense from the important city on these easy terms and with that desperate economy, but of reading heaven knows what instalment of romance into a mere railroad matter. (*AS* p.429)

⁸⁶ 'En Provence', *Atlantic Monthly*, 53 (April-May 1884), 623-31, p.623.

⁸⁷ 'En Provence', *Atlantic Monthly*, 52 (September 1883), 303-22, p.310.

⁸⁸ 'English Vignettes', *Lippincott's Magazine*, 23 (April 1879), 407-08, p.410.

Treating the occasion as an opportunity for tasking the ‘capable’ ‘imagination’, James puns on the sense of ‘mere railroad matter’ as trashy literature, conflating the railroad’s ‘desperate economy’ with its passengers’ rapid consumption of ‘romance’ in ‘instalment[s]’. He goes on to re-define such ‘mere railroad matter’ as a quotidian fact of American social life: ‘that a station should appear at a given moment to yield to the invasion of a dozen or so [...] vociferous young women [...] and that they should all treat [...] the crowded contemplative cars, quite as familiar, domestic, intimate ground’ (*AS* p.429). Struck by this candid behaviour, James allows his own dispersed, unregulated impressions to range freely, constituting a similarly agitated ‘invasion’ of the scene before him:

They fairly hummed, my suppressed reflections, in the manner of bees about a flower-bed, and burying their noses as deep in the corollae of the subject. Had I allowed myself time before the train resumed its direction, I should have thus found myself regarding the youths and the maidens [...] quite as creatures extraordinarily disconcerting, at first, as to the whole matter of their public behaviour, but covered a little by the mantle of charity as soon as it became clear that what [...] they suffer from, is the tragedy of their social, their cruel exposure, that treachery of fate which has kept them so out of their place. (*AS* p.430)

The episode is characterised by metaphors of extraction: ‘squeezing’, sucking nectar, drinking from a brimming cup. James suggests another kind of absorption, as he again invokes the attitude of railroad passengers immersed in ‘reading’: ‘burying their noses’ in their books or ‘subject[s]’. In the very midst of his involvement, busily gathering impressions from without ‘the car window’, the author reflexively employs this figure for detachment; a contradiction enhanced by the unsturdy terms of his own analogy. The flowerbed overtaken by ‘burying’ bees describes the girls’ ‘exposure’ to James’s scrutiny—the ‘hum[m]ing’ of his ‘suppressed reflections’. Yet the bees also implicitly align themselves with the ‘swarming [...] pretty

girls', to whose 'vociferous' 'invasion' the station must 'yield' (*AS* p.429). The threat of 'exposure', James suggests, applies not less to the author than to his attractive but bewildering 'subject[s]'. Reading is an analogy for protection from, as well as immersion in, the scene before him.

The train's own progress, affording James limited 'time', reinforces the 'predicament' of authorial 'continuity': the need to both 'intensely consult' and 'intensely ignore' (*LCFW* p.1041). The incident at Savannah station reinforces another such comparison James makes heading to Baltimore, in a train whose 'directness of connection' frames his complaint of a monotonous social and environmental climate: 'having its analogy in the vast vogue of some infinitely-selling novel, one of those happy volumes of which the circulation roars, periodically, from Atlantic to Pacific and from great windy State to State [...] with [...] little possibility of arrest from "criticism"' (*AS* p.305). There seems an implicit suggestion of both senses of the word 'indifference' here, as an antisocial attitude and as denoting the 'monotonized' absence of differences. James conflates the unconsciousness of the railway passenger entranced by a bestselling novel with a democratising sameness: 'the whole social order might have had its nose, for the time, buried, by one levelling doom, in the pages that, after the break of the spell, it would never know itself to mention again' (*AS* p.305).

The tendency of trains to stop less is a feature of James's later rail journeys, which he ruefully compares with those of earlier years. In *Notes of a Son and Brother*, James counts stopping as an aesthetic and educative resource, recording his 'impression of the endless day of our journey, my elder and my younger brothers' and mine, from Bonn to [Paris]' in September 1860. 'The railway service' was at that time a patchy facility, 'so little then what it has become that I even marvel at our having made our connections between our early rise in the Bonn-Gasse and our midnight tumble into bed at the Hôtel des Trois Empereurs' (*NSB* p.50).

Those were the September days in which French society [...] moved more or less in its mass upon Homburg and Baden-Baden; and we met it in expressive samples, and in

advance and retreat, during our incessant stops, those long-time old stops, unknown to the modern age, when everyone appeared to alight and walk about with the animation of prisoners suddenly pardoned, and ask for conveniences, and clamour for food, and get mixed with the always apparently still dustier people of opposite trains drawn up for the same purposes. (*NSB* p.51)

Occupying a first-class carriage, the James brothers are treated to the ‘frequent revelations’ of ‘a pair of footmen and a lady’s maid’, who ‘chattered by the hour for our wonderstruck ears’. The railway carriage is a richly sociable place to ‘fully feed’ on impressions; numbering itself among ‘my occasions of acutest receptivity’ (*NSB* p.51). Meanwhile, the train journey’s ‘incessant stops’, which constitute occasions for ‘sampl[ing]’ portions of society, become synonymous with an appreciation of the ‘complex [European] order [...] in which contrasts flared and flourished and through which discrimination could unexhaustedly riot’ (*NSB* p.52). ‘Discrimination’ here takes on a critical, as well as social meaning, for James would recall ‘those numerous and so far from edifying hours in our fine old deep-seated compartment’ as – paradoxically – the prequel to an ‘education [...] of [...] taste’. It is after this journey in particular that James learns ‘what the high periodical mean[s]’.

We were to fall as soon as we were at home again to reading the *Revue des Deux Mondes* [...] it took its place therewith as the very headspring of culture [...] Then it was that the special tension of the dragged-out day from Cologne to Paris proved, on the absurdest scale, a preparation, justified itself as a vivid point of reference. (*NSB* pp.52-53)

If James associates the ‘stopless and appalling’ modern train with failures of criticism and discrimination, the ‘dragged-out’ railway journey of ‘long-time old stops’ represents both the cultivation of social heterogeneity and the perceptual ability to appreciate such differences. James’s association of the much-stopping train with opportunities for ‘feeding’, ‘sampling’,

and ‘animation’ contrasts with the imagined train journey of *The Sacred Fount*, whose passengers are not ‘free to alight’ and whose resources are rapidly ebbing.

‘*Mere Railroad Matter*’

An article on ‘English Railway Fiction’ (1891) by Agnes Repplier, listing penny novelettes alongside other railway fare (oranges, lozenges, sandwiches), describes the sameness and blandness of this literature in terms of a pacifying and intoxicating fluid: ‘like vials of skimmed milk, labeled absinthe, but warranted to be wholly without flavo[u]r’. These stories, ‘so fearfully and wonderfully alike’, betray the mechanical ease of their production: ‘A gentle and unobtrusive dullness; a smooth fluency of style, suggestive of the author’s having written several hundreds of such stories before’. This ‘wonderful dullness’, Repplier explains, is ‘not really due to the absence of incidents of vice, or even of dramatic situations, but to the placidity with which these incidents or situations are presented and received’. She twice characterizes this response as an ‘indifference’, referring to the ‘extraordinary indifference [...] of penny-fiction characters’ in the absence of expected ‘scene[s] of transport’, and citing the ‘well-bred indifference’ of such narratives as the supposedly ‘sensational’ *Elfrida’s Wooing*, ‘where we have a villainous uncle foiled in his base plots; a father supposed to be drowned, but turning up just at the critical moment; a wicked lover baffled, a virtuous lover rewarded’, yet ‘everything is taken with such wonderful calm that not a ripple of excitement breaks over the smooth surface of the tale’.⁸⁹

Repplier’s complaint points to a contrast between late-century railway literature and the reading habits of the travelling public earlier in the century. Whereas, as Daly has argued, the sensation novel of the 1860s attempted to adjust its readers to the jolts and shocks of the (then relatively recent) railway journey, the reader-passenger of longer, smoother journeys at

⁸⁹ Agnes Repplier, ‘English Railway Fiction’, *Atlantic Monthly*, 68 (July 1891), 78-87, p.78, p.80, pp.81-82, p.79, p.80. HJ recorded meeting Repplier in Philadelphia, when the latter introduced his lecture ‘The Lesson of Balzac’ (to William James, 10 January 1905, *HJL*, IV, pp.336-37, p.336).

the turn of the century—which for James have a weird ‘absence of friction’ (*AS* p.310)—are now associated with bland, ‘ripple’-free literature, a public bored and desensitized.⁹⁰

For James, the railways’ cultivation of unhealthy ‘tastes’ is also literary and critical: its endorsement of the wrong kind of literature whose consumption is cited alongside the ‘engulfing’ of food in hotels and railway trains.⁹¹ In ‘The Future of the Novel’ (1899), James meditates upon the unstoppable development of both the novel and its system of promotion, the railway, finding an absence of ‘taste’ in ‘the flare of railway bookstalls’, and an alarming rapidity in the novel’s dissemination: ‘The book, in the Anglo-Saxon world, is almost everywhere.’ This is the fault of the circulating libraries; ‘the public that subscribes, borrows, lends, that picks [literature] up in one way and another’. As James complains: ‘Almost any variety [of novel] is thrown off and taken up, handled, admired, ignored by too many people.’⁹²

Such responses characterise the treatment of a novel-in-progress by the ignorant and careless house-guests of ‘The Death of the Lion’ (1894)—‘dropped’, ‘kicked about’, ‘transfer[red]’ between travellers, and ultimately left on the train. The story’s teleological crisis (‘everybody has the impression that somebody else has read it to the end’) satirises the impatience of the modern reader, accustomed to the ‘railway reading’ of serials, newspapers and magazines.⁹³ These materials make their way into other country houses in James’s fiction. In ‘The Figure in the Carpet’ (1896), the narrator waits for the author Hugh Vereker to approve his review: ‘I felt sure he hadn’t read it, though *The Middle* had been out three days and bloomed [...] in the stiff garden of periodicals which gave one of the ormolu tables the air of a stand at a station.’⁹⁴ In *The Spoils of Poynton*, the vulgar Mrs. Brigstock brings with her to Poynton ‘a trophy of her journey, a “lady’s magazine” purchased at the station

⁹⁰ Nicholas Daly, ‘Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and the Modernisation of the Senses’, *English Literary History*, 66 (1999).

⁹¹ In ‘The Manners of American Women’, observing ‘the fashions of feeding of one’s fellow travellers, always so conspicuous’, HJ deprecates ‘the sight of the newspapers the American women were reading, and the sight of the food they were engulfing’ (p.93).

⁹² ‘The Future of the Novel’ (1899), *Henry James, Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, ed. by Leon Edel (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp.100-110, p.101, p.100, p.103.

⁹³ ‘The Death of the Lion’, p.44, p.41.

⁹⁴ ‘The Figure in the Carpet’, in *Embarrassments* (London: Heinemann, 1897), pp.1-66, p.7.

[...] which, as it was quite new [...] and seemed so clever, she kindly offered to leave for the house' (p.28). The magazine—'a horrible thing'—is promptly ejected by Mrs Gereth, who as the Brigstocks leave, hurls it at the departing carriage: 'For heaven's sake, don't [...] forget [...] the female magazine, with the what-do-you-call-'em?—the grease-catchers. There!' (SOP p.28).

How directly James associated the railway with such indignities is suggested in another essay, 'The Science of Criticism' (1891). Here, James denounces the state of literary production and review, launching a scathing indictment of '[p]eriodical literature' as 'a huge open mouth that has to be fed—a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled'

like a regular train [...] which is free to start only if every seat be occupied. The seats are many, the train is ponderously long, and hence the manufacture of dummies for the seasons when there are not passengers enough. A stuffed manikin is thrust into the empty seat, where it makes a figure till the end of the journey. It looks sufficiently like a passenger, and you know it is not one only when you perceive that it neither says anything nor gets out. The guard attends to it when the train is shunted, blows the cinders from its wooden face [...] so that it may serve for another run.

There is a particularity about James's selection of the train to indicate the periodical: 'well-conducted', 'punctual', and with the potential for continuous, serial journeys. The description of the train as a 'huge open mouth' or hungry 'vessel', with its cargo of porous and 'stuffed' passengers, also evinces similar anxieties—regarding the agency and distribution of consciousness—to those displayed by the characters of *The Sacred Fount*. Alongside insufficient elements ('not passengers enough') James's essay is replete with images of excess and fluidity, as the 'commodity' of literary criticism 'flows through the periodical press like a river that has burst its dikes'.⁹⁵ The conceit of the train describes at once the

⁹⁵ 'The Science of Criticism' (1891), *LCEL*, pp.95-99, p.95.

‘vessel’ of literature and its indifferent consumers, for the passengers who ‘serve’ the train as fodder are themselves ‘attend[ed]’ to and ‘stuffed’.

In both *The Sacred Fount* and *The American Scene*, the threat of uniformity is tied to that of reliance through the railway, whose own relation to narrative form was no mere analogy. James’s interest in, and discomfort with, the changing nature of literary production and the commodification of the author form the context for the following—and concluding—sections of the thesis. My next chapter considers James’s use of the bicycle to figure the relation between the author and his public, as well as the ways in which this vehicle has been adopted by other writers and critics, to mediate the figure of Henry James himself.

- 4 -

‘Henry’s Bicycle’: Cycling in ‘The Papers’ (1903)

In the most recent film production of *The Golden Bowl* (2000), Prince Amerigo wins a bicycle race in a scene that doesn’t appear in the novel. Questioned about the addition, the screenwriter pointed out that ‘you can’t have a languid central character otherwise why would [...] two women be in love with him? You need some kind of driving force’.¹ The remark gestures at a complaint frequently levelled against James by his critics: an impatience with characters deemed almost wilfully immobile.

The use of the bicycle in Jamesian media is also suggestive, however, as an instance of how transport negotiates the figure or idea of the author himself. As the only form of transport that James doesn’t experience as a passenger, but (as it were) as a prime mover, cycling draws an inescapable attention to this figure. Not only does the bicycle move the body, but the body also visibly moves – and is displayed by – the bicycle, a fact that was key to its early association with the cult of personality.

This chapter considers how issues of authorial accessibility and publicity are linked to, as well as by, James, via the bicycle. This vehicle’s own faddish celebrity and close association with the secretarial and print industries lent itself to debates about the new role and visibility of public figures in the late nineteenth century. In his journalistic tale, ‘The Papers’ (1903), James draws upon the bicycle’s associations with physical and media exposure to dramatize anxieties about the revelation of the author, indicating the bicycle as a technology which, like the typewriter, threatened to make visible both the writer’s body and his process. The bicycle’s residual connotations with exposure, I will suggest, continue to inform figurations of James as a cyclist, troping the author’s own notorious aversion to publicity.

¹ ‘Philip Horne in conversation with Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’, *Guardian*, 27 October 2000, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2000/oct/27/2>> [accessed 23 August 2013].

The chapter takes its title from an episode in Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). Bill Gorton is chaffing an American journalist, Jake Barnes, about the ruinous effects of expatriation upon a writer: 'Nobody that ever left their country ever wrote anything worth printing. Not even in the newspapers.' In the course of the conversation, Gorton alludes to Barnes's impotence—the result of being wounded in a plane crash—as 'the sort of thing that can't be spoken of [...] a mystery. Like Henry's bicycle'.²

The reference, as Fred Crawford and Bruce Morton note, was likely prompted by the publication of *The Letters of Henry James* by Scribner's in 1920, which Hemingway's wife Hadley read, and in which James mentions his bicycle excursions.³ Barnes's ambiguous war wound more directly invokes the 'mystery' surrounding the youthful injury James sustained putting out a fire in West Stables, Newport, in October 1861.⁴ No bicycle was involved in the accident, which prevented the author enlisting in the Civil War, and gave rise to rumours of his castration.⁵ James referred to his injury as an 'obscure hurt' whose 'interest' he deemed 'inexhaustible', even while he declined to 'place it [...] on exhibition' (*NSB* p.277). Gorton's own queasy reference to it in Hemingway's novel as 'the sort of thing that can't be spoken of' appears to inspire an equal reticence:

He had been going splendidly, but he stopped. I was afraid
he thought he had hurt me with that crack about being
impotent. I wanted to start him again.

'It wasn't a bicycle', I said, 'He was riding
horseback.'

'I heard it was a tricycle.'

² Hemingway, *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* (London: Random House, 2004), p.100, p.101.

³ Fred D. Crawford, and Bruce Morton, 'Hemingway and Brooks: The Mystery of "Henry's Bicycle"', *Studies in American Fiction*, 6 (1979), 106-09, p.108.

⁴ James had found himself 'jammed into the acute angle between two high fences' trying to 'get a quasi-extemporised old [fire] engine to work' (*NSB* p.277).

⁵ Eric Haralson traces the origins of the 'James-as-castrato legend', prevalent throughout the 1920s and 30s, to Van Wyck Brooks' mention of HJ's accident in *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925). The bicycle as agent seems to have been Hemingway's addition (Haralson, *Henry James and Queer Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.194-200, p.196, p.195).

‘Well’, I said, ‘A plane is sort of like a tricycle. The joy stick works the same way’.

‘But you don’t pedal it.’

‘No’, I said, ‘I guess you don’t pedal it.’

‘Let’s lay off that’, Bill said.

‘Alright. I was just standing up for the tricycle.’

‘I think he’s a good writer, too’, Bill said.⁶

In this exchange, the rhetorical mechanism of ‘Henry’s bicycle’ functions both euphemistically, and as a device for physical and narrative exposure, gesturing slyly at what ‘can’t be spoken of’. Gorton’s hesitancy is like a vehicle, one which had been ‘going splendidly’, but which, once ‘stopped’, requires ‘start[ing] again’. The figure also gradually hints at an actual figure or body: seated astride horse or bicycle, ‘pedal’[ing], ‘laying’ down, and finally—rather insolently—‘standing up.’

The reference garbles together certain biographical truths about James, who did ride horseback, in Rome, in January 1873, and did learn to ride a bicycle, in Devon, some 22 years later. But the fact of his participation in these activities, which might seem rather to dispel questions of castration, is here made their instigator, presumably because the seat of the bicycle points awkwardly to the area of injury, the area which can’t be talked about, and yet is fairly often talked about in James studies.

Hemingway exploits the fact of James having ridden a bicycle to make two distinct yet associated gripes against the author. In the first place, as Neal Houston has noted, the image of the author cycling is employed descriptively, as a form of physical exercise that satirises his characters’ and his own perceived ‘inactivity’.⁷ In the second, Hemingway relies upon a longstanding use of the bicycle as a synonym for exposure, troping a ‘mystery’ deemed characteristic of James’s private life and fictional environments. This sense of

⁶ *The Sun Also Rises*, p.101.

⁷ Neal B. Houston, ‘Hemingway: The Obsession with Henry James, 1924-54’, *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 39 (1985), 33-46, p.34.

exposure is touched upon in the context of Gorton and Barnes's conversation about what is 'worth printing' 'in the newspapers'. But the remark itself would also be associated with unsavoury media attention, for the reference to 'Henry James's bicycle'—as it originally read—was found too risqué by Hemingway's publisher, Maxwell Perkins, who leaned upon the author to remove it. In response, Hemingway invoked his journalistic privilege: 'To me, Henry James is as historical a name as Byron, Keats, or any other great writer about whose life, personal and literary, books have been written. I do not believe the reference is sneering, or if it is, it is not the writer who is sneering as the writer does not appear in the book.'⁸

The relation between cycling, James, and authorial visibility is the central question of this chapter. As a journalist himself, Hemingway's construction of the writer as a sportsman—a figure whose publicity and virility are equally important—suggests an inheritance from writers of James's generation.⁹ Bill Brown has examined sport as a crucial source of metaphor for authors in the late nineteenth century, arguing that 'the problems and possibilities of the recreational assume pivotal importance in the way Americans conceive and experience their [...] public selves'. Brown employs the term 'recreational' as 'a generic name for the many sites where we seek physical and psychic pleasure publicly, where our pleasure often derives from our being-in-public'.¹⁰ James is cited as a figure significantly excluded from this pleasure, as Brown notes the author's dismayed reaction to the Harvard football stadium, on returning to America in 1904, as 'a portent of the more *roaring*, more reported and excursionized scene' (*AS* p.70).

The connection of 'Henry's bicycle' to the bicycle itself has largely been ignored, with critics apparently heeding Hemingway's own dismissal of the allusion as a 'non-

⁸ To Maxwell Perkins, 5 June 1926, *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-61*, ed. by Carlos Baker (London: Granada, 1981), p.209.

⁹ Mark Cirino has discussed Hemingway's especial fixation with the sport of cycling. The author was a keen follower of professional cyclists, featuring racers like Bartolomeo Aymo and Ottavio Bottechia in his novels, and even conspicuously identifying himself with the cycling champion. As John Dos Passos recalled: 'Hem was mad about bicycle racing. He used to get himself up in a striped jumper like a contestant on the Tour de France and ride around the exterior boulevards with his knees up to his ears and his chin between the handlebars' (qtd in Cirino, "'A Bicycle is a Splendid Thing': Hemingway's Source for Bartolomeo Aymo in *A Farewell to Arms*", *The Hemingway Review*, 26 (2006), 106-14, p.113).

¹⁰ Bill Brown, *The Material Unconscious: American Amusement, Stephen Crane, & the Economies of Play* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.4, p.3, p.2.

sequitur'.¹¹ Yet Gorton and Barnes' exchange, which emphasizes James's effeminacy, and places the author-as-cyclist, as Eric Haralson notes, squarely amidst their 'gender-switching patter', suggests a particularity about this vehicle, hinting at the sexual ambiguities conferred by the bicycle.¹²

Finally, the reference is only one of several posthumous (and typically indecorous) portrayals of the author as a cyclist which employ the bicycle to foreground James's own guarded interiority. The bicycle's resonance for these writers derives, I think, from its unique positioning within late-nineteenth-century media culture. Because to talk about the bicycle is also to talk about the body, cycling features prominently in what might be called the literatures of exposure, such as the detective story, the romantic comedy, and particularly the illustrated newspaper. James's own newspaper tale, 'The Papers', satirises the celebrity's 'eagerness to figure' through its advertisement of a pair of cycling journalists.¹³ The bicycle's unique attachment to the physical 'figure' makes it a troubling metaphoric resource in the tale, reflexively drawing attention to the authorial work of 'figuring' in which the journalists themselves are constantly engaged, and to the creation of the author *as* a public figure.

'The Humours of Cycling'

Henry James learned to ride a bicycle at Torquay, in the summer of 1895, on a 'battered Humber' (fig. 17).¹⁴ It was the year, according to *The Complete Cyclist* (1897), when 'cycling became fashionable as well as popular', and even 'ladies' took to the wheel.¹⁵ By this time, the Safety bicycle had established itself against the Ordinary, or Penny Farthing, whose high front wheel had discouraged many from attempting to ride. The pneumatic and—from

¹¹ To Maxwell Perkins, 5 June 1926, *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters*, p.209.

¹² Noting that 'James was in fact rather adept at riding', Haralson adds that Hemingway's 'version of "Henry James" might as well be the "man on her horse" of Bill Gorton's gender-switching patter' (Haralson, *Henry James and Queer Modernity*, p.195).

¹³ 'The Papers', p.317.

¹⁴ To Arthur Christopher Benson, 29 June 1896, *Henry James: Letters to A.C. Benson and Auguste Monod*, ed. by E. F. Benson (London: Mathews & Marrot, 1930), pp.34-36, p.35.

¹⁵ B. Fletcher Robinson, (ed.), *The Complete Cyclist* (London: Innes, 1897), p.33.

1891—detachable tire had also contributed to the popular adoption of the hobby.¹⁶ As H. G. Wells would record, ‘the bicycle was the swiftest thing upon the roads in those days, there were as yet no automobiles and the cyclist had a lordliness, a sense of masterful adventure’.¹⁷

In 1896, James exclaims in a letter to Arthur Christopher Benson:

Anch’io son ’pittore—I too have a bicycle. I’ve taken to it but very recently—but it seems to give me a glimpse of the courts of heaven. What a pity we can’t pedal into them together! But I observe you lay stress on the fact that you bike *alone*. So be it—you are safe: I shall have to be much more brilliant than I am yet before I strain in your undeviating wake. This little old-world corner of Sussex is lovely and sympathetic [...] and the way one gets *at* it is really a joy. But I needn’t preach at the converted.¹⁸

From 1896, Edel reports, James ‘had begun to use the bicycle whenever he was in the country’, renting a house for that summer in Playden, Sussex.¹⁹ In September, presumably more confident on wheels, James wrote again to Benson, urging him to ‘bring your bicycle in your train’ so that he ‘could take [him on] a charming ride’.²⁰ The following August, James visited his cousin Ellen Hunter (née Temple) and her three daughters in Dunwich, for a holiday whose ‘afternoon spin[s]’ and stops for ‘lemonade’ and beer at ‘old red inn[s]’ would be recorded in his essay ‘Old Suffolk’ (1897).²¹ James wrote to Gosse that ‘I have [...] only, as the goal of excursions, inn-parlours, in all directions to which I vulgarly bicycle and where I partake of [...] buns and jam.’²² Meanwhile, he reported to his brother, William:

¹⁶ David Herlihy, *Bicycle: The History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp.251-52.

¹⁷ H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain*, 2 vols (London: Faber, 1934), II, p.543.

¹⁸ 29 June 1896, *Letters to A.C. Benson and Auguste Monod*, pp.34-36, p.35.

¹⁹ Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, p.230.

²⁰ 2 September 1896, *Letters to A.C. Benson and Auguste Monod*, pp.37-38, p.37.

²¹ ‘Old Suffolk’, p.311. The American cousins robustly accompanied the author on muddy excursions. ‘He is awfully sweet and affectionate and non-terrifying, and tragic-eyed’, wrote Jane Emmet to her sister Lydia. ‘He hangs poised for the right word while the wheels of life go round.’ She added: ‘He rides a bicycle which is his only attempt at sport’ (qtd. in Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, p.237).

²² To Edmund Gosse, 1 September 1897, *Selected Letters of Henry James to Edmund Gosse 1882-1915: A Literary Friendship* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), pp.157-59, p.158.

I have done, with great pleasure and profit, a good deal of the bicycle; for which this region offers every inducement that can be offered without roads. We are miles and miles from a good one—which is partly indeed why we are quaint and curious.²³

James's inclination toward 'sympathetic' and remote 'corner[s]'—'miles from' anywhere—bespeaks a desire for privacy: a 'quaint' and 'old-world' setting in which to try out a new-fangled form of exercise. His visit to Dunwich drawing to a close, the author met up with his friend Edward Warren, the architect, and as the pair 'bumped and bounced and vainly shifted sides' on their bicycles, James broached the subject of Lamb House, 'the mansion with the garden house perched on the wall'. The house had fortuitously become available, though James did not move in properly until June 1898.²⁴

As a young man, the author had enjoyed both the 'luxurious, the *princely*, sensation—of keeping a saddle-horse', and the image of himself as a 'cavalier', galloping across the countryside outside Rome accompanied by a cohort of female equestriennes.²⁵ Over twenty years later, 'trundling over [Romney] Marsh' on his bicycle, James recaptures the scene of his earlier rides: 'When the summer deepens, the shadows fall, and the mounted shepherds and their dogs pass before you in the grassy desert, you find in the mild English "marsh" a recall of the Roman Campagna'.²⁶

These different forms of exercise (if horse-riding was 'princely', cycling was 'most vulgar') yet shared some mechanical similarities, each drawing attention to the *person* of the rider. Besides the 'elastic bound' and 'divine undulations' of galloping, James's records of his rides describe a liberating removal from public life. 'It is a pleasure that doubles one's horizon', offering 'a sort of romantic possibility' outside the city, 'with [its] crowds [...] and

²³ To William James, 1 September 1897, *The Correspondence of William James*, III, pp.18-22, pp.18-19.

²⁴ To Edward Warren, 15 September 1897, *HJL*, IV, p.56.

²⁵ To Mary Walsh James, 24 March 1873, *CL* 1872-76, I, pp.240-47. HJ announced that he was 'now in the position of a creature with *five* women *offering* to ride with [him]: Mrs Sumner, Mrs.W[ister], Mrs Boit, Miss Bartlett & Lizzie B.' (p.242).

²⁶ 'Winchelsea, Rye, and "Denis Duval"', *Scribner's Magazine*, 29 (January 1901), 44-53, p.52.

theatres [...] and receptions, and dinner-parties, and all the modern confusion of social pleasures and pains':

to have at your door the good and evil of it all; and yet to be able in half an hour to gallop away and leave it a hundred miles, a hundred years, behind [...] and then to come back through one of the great gates, and, a couple of hours later, find yourself in the 'world', dressed, introduced, entertained [...] all this is to lead a sort of double life.²⁷



Figure 17: 'a battered Humber'

²⁷ 'Roman Rides', *Atlantic Monthly*, 32 (August 1873), 190-98, p.196, pp.190-91.

As Sarah Wadsworth notes, these kinds of ‘Jamesian dualities’—touching the privacy and authenticity of the author or social subject—anticipate key concerns of his late fiction. In a recent article, Wadsworth dwells upon the curious figure cut by the young ‘equestrian James, poised in tall boots astride a galloping steed’, as ‘incongruous’, for most readers, with ‘the image of the portly middle-aged James erusticated at Lamb House’. His essay, ‘Roman Rides’ (1873), can be considered ‘something of an anomaly in James’s body of writing’, Wadsworth argues, in that it ‘departs from the very “indoor” orientation of much of [the author’s] work and provides an unconstrained “outside” view from a writer best known for mapping interior landscapes’. She goes on to identify and contrast James’s ‘double life’ as a *rider* (‘wholesome’, ‘holistic’) with the split selves and ‘isolated, fragmented li[ves] of the *writer*’ offered in tales like ‘The Private Life’ (1892) and ‘The Great Good Place’ (1900).²⁸ In the earlier tale, the feted yet harassed author delegates to a ghostly double in order to cater for his public persona and private (working) self. In the later story, he is spirited away from the demands of his public to a surreal retreat: a ‘great good place’. James’s anxieties regarding authorial publicity at the turn of the century, Wadsworth suggests, correspond to a felt lack of the cohesion achieved by the Roman rider, who can exit the social world and re-enter it at will.

Such anxieties inflect James’s later experience of the bicycle, a vehicle which both guaranteed a new range of personal freedoms, and involved its rider in an inescapably public (and much debated) type of social behaviour. James’s own discovery of the bicycle coincided with his withdrawal from the public eye, and in particular from the excruciatingly public condemnation of *Guy Domville* in 1895.²⁹ To varying degrees, subsequent depictions of this episode of James’s life draw upon his cycling habits to trope a sense of exposure. Edel describes how the author retreated to write tales that ‘showed a state that he himself called

²⁸ Sarah Wadsworth, ‘Henry James Rides Again’, *HJR*, 31 (2010), 218-31, pp.219-20. Wadsworth is chiefly concerned with James’s essay as an American transcendentalist response, whose ‘Jamesian dualities’ are reconciled by ‘Emersonian unities’ (p.219).

²⁹ *Guy Domville* opened on 5 January 1895 at the St. James’s Theatre.

‘embarrassment’, wanting only ‘to be left alone’ and ‘to ride his bicycle’.³⁰ David Lodge’s fictional *Author Author!* (2004), whose title recalls James being ushered onstage only to be jeered by his audience, conjoins the indignity James suffered as a dramatist with his equally theatrical exposure as a cyclist, inventing episodes in which James, bruised and corpulent, falls spectacularly from his bicycle.³¹ The cover of one edition shows the author taking a bow, while the figure of the cyclist is displayed on its frontispiece, skirting merrily across the page (fig.18).

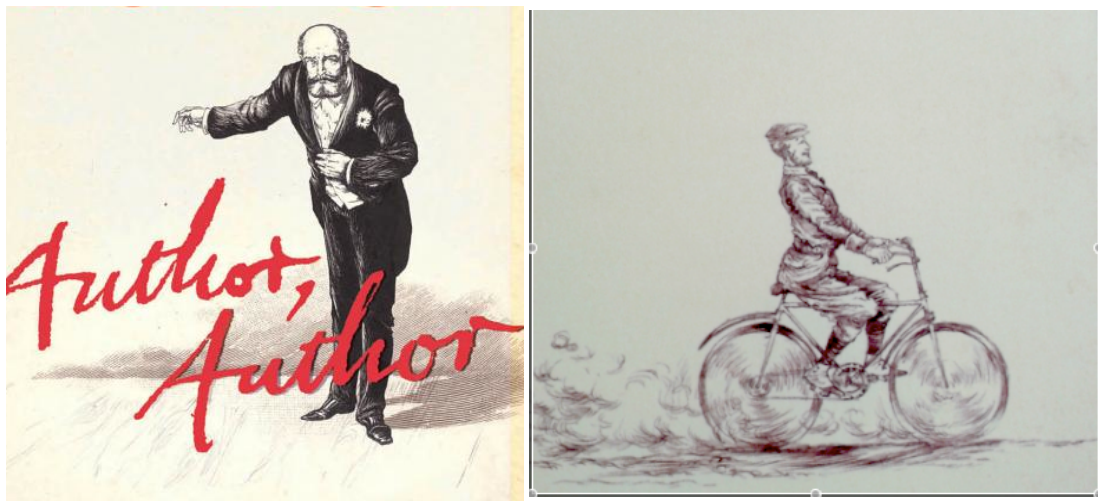


Figure 8: ‘Author, Author’

Lodge’s use of the bicycle to satirize the disjunction of a lofty mind from an awkward or incompetent body points to the split or doubled perspectives irresistibly promoted by the bicycle, (to be contrasted with the cohesive dualities Wadsworth identifies in James’s experience of horse-riding). The joke was also much exploited in James’s day:

One moment, lord of creation and all the world beside, you ride haughtily along, your face turned heavenward (always a rash proceeding when cycling), plotting a novel which shall ‘knock the spots off them tother fellows’, and then, just as [...] your

³⁰ Edel, *Henry James: The Treacherous Years* (London: Hart-Davis, 1969), pp.136-37. The four tales that James wrote in 1895 were published under the title *Embarrassments* in 1896.

³¹ Lodge, *Author, Author: A Novel* (London: Secker & Warburg, 2004), p.303.

greatness is a-ripening, you fall...³²

The literary cyclist presented a type of celebrity and a particular source of humour. Though for James the countryside represented a retreat ('so pleasant for me has provinciality—with books and a bicycle!—become!') the author was only one of a cluster of writers who lived and cycled in Kent and Sussex at the turn of the century, which included H.G. Wells at Sandgate, Stephen Crane at Brede House, Joseph Conrad at Postling, and Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer) at Aldington.³³ Bicycling anecdotes punctuate such studies as Nicholas Delbanco's *Group Portrait* (1982), Iain Finlayson's *Writers in Romney Marsh* (1986), and Miranda Seymour's *A Ring of Conspirators* (1988), as well as autobiographical accounts like Ford's *Return to Yesterday* (1931) and Wells's *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934). Wells would famously cycle out from Brede House in search of medical assistance after Crane suffered a tubercular haemorrhage during a disastrous New Year's Eve party in 1899. Ford would also recall Wells bicycling furiously over to Stocks Hill to dissuade him from collaborating with Conrad, a partnership which, he contended, could only be to the detriment of the latter's style: 'I can still see the dispirited action of Mr. Wells as he mounted his bicycle by the rear step and rode away along that ridge of little hills'.³⁴ In an account which takes advantage of the opportunities cycling afforded for ridicule, Ford claimed to have witnessed James meet with an accident while riding on his bicycle:

I remember [...] walking along the [...] road with Crane when we perceived approaching us James, then bearded and much more majestic than he appeared later in life [...] He was riding his bicycle almost more slowly than I thought it was possible to do [...] There went past Crane and myself a young woman in the very earliest stages of bicycle riding. The inevitable happened. No sooner was that young woman level with

³² G.B. Burgin, 'Some Emotions—and No Morals; or How to Learn "to Bike"', in *The Humours of Cycling*, pp.25-27, p.26.

³³ To Grace Norton, 3 September 1896, qtd. in Edel, *Treacherous Years*, p.160.

³⁴ Qtd. in Miranda Seymour, *A Ring of Conspirators: Henry James and his Literary Circle 1895-1915* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), pp.152-53.

the master than she let go the handles of her machine with a shriek. The machine immediately swerved to the right and her front wheel struck his exactly at right angles. My emotions and Crane's were of such agitation that we neither of us saw what happened immediately next. For we both by one accord stepped behind a large bush on the roadside, not wishing to let the great man see that we had witnessed his downfall.

But the point I want to make with this tale is that neither Crane nor myself saw anything comic in the incident. Usually, I imagine, one would laugh if one saw a nice old gentleman knocked off his bicycle and sitting in the road, but Crane uttered exclamations of intense concern as if he were witnessing a catastrophe of the most terrible importance [...] That was a great tribute to James! ³⁵

Ford relays his story in titillating and incongruent fragments, declining absolutely to 'witness' James's 'downfall' while recording it for posterity, asserting that '[t]he inevitable happened', but also that 'we neither of us saw what happened', and obligingly removing himself from James's view having already offered a close-up of 'the great man' himself: 'bearded', 'majestic', 'curious'.

The bicycle's ignominious appearance aligns this (probably apocryphal) episode with other dubious 'tribute[s] to James', which derive their *frisson* from the fact that it is James—'the Master'!—and not just any cyclist, 'sitting in the road'. Yet the narrator's assumption that 'one would laugh' at the spectacle of 'nice old gentle[men]' knocked off their bicycles also takes for granted the tremendous culture of embarrassment surrounding the bicycle in the nineteenth century, which featured women, novices, and middle-aged men as particular victims. James implies a recognition of this culture when, on two separate occasions, he refers to his cycling habits by enjoining his correspondent not to laugh at him, writing jocularly to Frances Rollins Morse in 1895 that 'I too—deride me not—do it: I have no courage, here, to

³⁵ Ford, *New York Essays* (New York: Rudge, 1927), p.22.

be a glaring exception'.³⁶ And the following year, to W. E. Norris, insisting that 'I must (deride me not) be somewhere where I can, without disaster, bicycle'.³⁷

The opportunities cycling provided for derision and disaster were a feature of even purportedly factual handbooks like *The Complete Cyclist*, which devoted entire chapters to 'The Humours of Cycling'. The amateur, observed one commentator, invariably found himself the attraction of 'an admiring and expectant crowd [...] which, rising like Venus from the waves, gather around in anticipation of a performance of an acrobatic nature; for which, moreover, there will be nothing to pay'.³⁸ The hapless novice attempting to master his machine proved a considerable selling point for Wells's *The Wheels of Chance* (1895), whose hero's bruised shins and misadventures were based upon the author's own. In his autobiography, Wells recalled having 'learnt to ride my bicycle upon sandy tracks with none but God to help me', but was able to recoup his private indignity as commercial gain: 'After a fall one day, I wrote down a description of my legs, which became the opening chapter'.³⁹ The link between physical and narrative exposure is made explicit in the novel, as the narrator's peek at 'the Remarkable Condition' of 'this Young Man's Legs'—a patchwork of welts into which the cyclist lovingly rubs arnica every evening—is prefaced by his excuse that '[l]iterature is revelation', and '[m]odern literature is indecorous revelation. It is the duty of the earnest author to tell you what you would not have seen—even at the cost of a few blushes'.⁴⁰

The bicycle's speed and stealth earned it a frequent place in the detective story, another genre which catered for the thrills of 'revelation'. Bodies and bicycles are disclosed with equal rigour in 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist' (1903), in which Sherlock Holmes instantly identifies the bicycling habits of a young woman by studying her heels and

³⁶ To Frances Rollins Morse, 12 October 1895, bMS Am 1094, Houghton Library.

³⁷ To W.E. Norris, 4 February 1896, *HJL*, II, pp.26-28, p.28.

³⁸ Gilbert Floyd, 'The Humours of Cycling', in *The Complete Cyclist*, pp.155-80, p.164.

³⁹ Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, p.543.

⁴⁰ Wells, *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (New York: Macmillan, 1897), p.5. For a discussion of 'the undermining presence of the body' in the cycling narrative see Simon J. James, 'Fin-de-Cycle: Romance and the Real in *The Wheels of Chance*', in *H. G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. by Steven McLean (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp.34-48, p.42.

fingertips. In ‘The Adventure of the Priory School’ (1903), Holmes and Watson literally ‘track’ the distinctive marks of a Dunlop tire through the dirt, the former remarking that ‘a bicycle is not an easy thing to conceal or destroy’.⁴¹ Romantic comedies likewise adopted the vehicle with alacrity, as authors appealed to the gender boundaries blurred by the bicycle for a source of nervous humour and fascination, depicting cross-dressing cyclists revealing their ankles and identities to the sound of convulsive laughter.⁴²

As Ford’s savoured and saved-up anecdote, or Wells’s own lucrative self-parody suggests, the modern author intent on satisfying his public may himself be subject to ‘indecorous revelation’. The bicycle’s fame coincided with, and benefited from, the rise of the illustrated newspaper and personal interview, which created new expectations concerning the visibility and accessibility of public figures. An interview ‘At Home’ with Wells included both a portrait of the author—wearing a deerstalker and clutching a Jack Russell—and the assurance that ‘the most charming of [the author’s various] homes was “Heatherlea”, Worcester Park, where [...] he and Mrs. Wells [...] might often be met cycling on their tandem in the country lanes’.⁴³

‘a shocker in petticoats’

Of particular interest among the riders at the opening of James’s glossily ‘horsy’ tale, ‘Lady Barberina’ (1884), are the ‘stiffened’ ‘figures’ of mounted ‘Amazons’, whose ‘tight-fitting habits’, ‘blooming competent physique’, and attitude of being ready ‘to ride a charge’ anticipate the next siege of New Women on bicycles. As the female cyclist would adorn the bicycle posters and advertisements of the 1890s, James’s riders present Hyde Park as

⁴¹ ‘The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist’, in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Collier, 1905), pp.93-118, p.136; and ‘The Adventure of the Priory School’, in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, pp.119-58, p.126.

⁴² See, e.g., *Wheels: A Bicycle Romance* by A. Wheeler (New York: Dillingham, 1896), in which two sisters, Helena and Georgiana, assume male disguise for a cycling tour of Europe and encounter a ‘Mr and Mrs Browne’—both male cyclists in disguise—with hilarious results.

⁴³ ‘Mr. H.G. Wells’, *The Woman at Home*, [Date Unknown], p.216. The interviewer emphasizes the author’s sporting background, noting that ‘Mr. Wells is a Bromley man, and is the son of a professional cricketer’.

‘completely illustrative’: both visually splendid, and instructive in their demonstration of social behaviour.⁴⁴

James was not indifferent to the cultural changes wrought by the bicycle, exclaiming, in 1895, at the ‘social evolution it’s producing!’⁴⁵ In ‘The Manners of American Women’, the bicycle features in an example of disconcerting new type of female behaviour, as the author recalls the striking lack of civility shown by a cyclist in response to her male companion—‘supremely obliging, if not supremely expert’—repairing a punctured tyre:

He made it over to its owner working quite smoothly again, and she dropped him, as she remounted, a thin, short, perfunctory ‘Thanks’ which had the effect of making our eyes, his and mine, the next moment, meet in wondering intelligence. [...] One was reminded afresh of the scant practice, in this direction, enjoyed by queens; yet as the American girl rode, at her queenly rate, away, she struck me as faring, all unconscious but all doomed, into the strongest desert of solitude and ignorance. It was the last thing she could have dreamed of, but it was as if she had written herself, by her renunciation of the power intimately to touch, lonely, blighted, and disinherited. She was blind, she was deaf, to the stops of the social pipe, and its broken fragments seemed to crunch under her as she passed.⁴⁶

James’s report is technically less damning of the bicycle than of ‘the American girl’ in comparison with her ‘European sister’ (also a cyclist), who displays—in response to the same service—a greater degree of affability and humility. Yet the bicycle is made to function as the instrument by which benign reciprocities are reduced to ‘fragments’, to illustrate the ‘direction’ in which a particularly disquieting type of behaviour is tending, and to provide the

⁴⁴ ‘Lady Barberina’, *Century Magazine*, 28 (May-July 1884) 18-31, 222-34, 336-50, p.20, p.18. As David Herlihy has noted, ‘the bicycle boom coincided with what became known as the ‘golden age of illustration’, of which ‘a favourite medium was the large colourful poster, made possible by recent advances in lithography’ (*Bicycle: The History*, p.280).

⁴⁵ To Francis Rollins Morse, 12 October 1895, Houghton Library, bMS Am 1094.

⁴⁶ ‘The Manners of American Women’, pp.111-12.

haughty elevation with which its owner ‘rode, at her queenly rate, away’. What is curious is the reflexive phrase with which James both indicates a ‘renunciation of [her] power’ and seems ironically to reinstate it. The cyclist’s bleak future is one to which she is ‘unconscious’, but also one into which ‘it was as if she had written herself’. As James and his companion are transformed into ‘wondering’ spectators, the unchaperoned female cyclist presumptuously co-opts the narrative, writing herself into notorious independence.

The ambivalent agency of the female cyclist in print has been noted by Patricia Marks, who draws attention to how



Figure 19: ‘The New Woman ’

the illustrated newspaper both humoured her efforts to establish herself, and assured the New Woman a publicity which secured, and even validated, her position.

In the hue and cry that followed the determined figure in bloomers, the popular press was among the loudest. [...] She cavorted through the pages of *Life*, *Puck*, *Punch*, and

Truth perched on bicycles and smoking cigarettes; she looked learned in judges' wigs and academic gowns and athletic in riding pants and football helmets.⁴⁷

Publications such as *The Lady Cyclist* and *The Wheelwoman* saw the newspaper's accommodation of the female cyclist as reader and contributor, as opposed to mere object of ridicule. In 1895, as *Cycling* magazine included a 'ladies only' section, *Hearth and Home* responded to the 'claim' of 'the bicycling woman' by 'offering [its] readers a Special Cycling Number' and 'arranging that the interests of women on wheels shall be catered for each week [...] by writers of practical experience'.⁴⁸ In the same year, *The Penny Illustrated* approved the bicycle for female journalists and secretaries, designating cycling as a sport accessible to (and associated with) 'hard-working typists [...] who recognised the bicycle as a grand means to gain fresh air and lots of healthy exercise'.⁴⁹

Among James's own most 'irrepressible' cycling companions had been his secretary, William MacAlpine, to whom the author 'remember[ed]' giving his 'first bicycle and lessons' while holidaying at Bournemouth in July 1897, and who 'at once became a great adept' (*CN* p.407).⁵⁰ 'It is admirable cycling weather, & I did 22 miles to-day with my irrepressible Scot', James writes to Gosse, 12 October 1898.⁵¹ Or, 'I seized [a moment] this afternoon to roll Ixion-like over to Tenterden—with MacA[lpine], who might with a finger have stayed me, but who unerringly used that member to kindly show me the way'.⁵² When moving to Rye entailed the 'sacrifice [...] of [the author's] excellent Scotch amanuensis', it was a Miss Mary Weld who supplied the 'pressing want'—as James wrote to his brother—of 'some sound, sane, irreproachable young type-writing and bicycling "secretary-companion"'.⁵³ James's conjunction of 'type-writing and bicycling' would be echoed by Miss Petherbridge of the

⁴⁷ Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 1990), p.2.

⁴⁸ 'Omnia Vincit Bicycle', *Hearth and Home*, 17 October 1895, p.808.

⁴⁹ 'The Rage for Cycling', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 6 July 1895, p.17.

⁵⁰ The reminiscence is from HJ's pocket-diary, 30 July 1914.

⁵¹ To Edmund Gosse, *HJL*, IV, pp.81-82, p.82.

⁵² 14 September 1898, *Selected Letters of Henry James to Edmund Gosse*, p.163.

⁵³ To William James, 20 April 1898, *HJL*, IV, pp.72-75, p.74, p.75.

Secretarial Bureau, who advised Weld that the author was ‘disposed to be extremely friendly and [...] you ought to have a very pleasant time [...] P.S. Your bicycle would be very nice there’.⁵⁴

There is nothing to suggest that James found Mary Weld anything other than ‘irreproachable’, though he apparently communicated, and she acutely registered, his unease at certain categories of the modern professional woman. An anecdote from Weld’s diary relates how, ‘while walking together down the steep hill of Mermaid Street, they passed a short-haired girl’ of ‘a decidedly masculine appearance’. As James voiced his dismay at the apparition, and enjoined her not to emulate it— ‘Glory in your femininity, Miss Weld!’—his secretary became ‘painfully conscious that her sailor hat was rather like the one the girl was wearing’ and immediately resolved to change it: ‘According to her [...] nothing distressed him more than a woman trying to look like a man’.⁵⁵

James’s portrayal of a demonstrably ‘mannish’—and ‘sailor-hatted’—female journalist and cyclist in ‘The Papers’ lends a particular resonance to this incident.⁵⁶ Weld’s diary would also recount her transcription of this tale in 1902, whose dictation appears to have been framed by bicycling excursions.⁵⁷

16 October Thursday

Finish ‘The Beast in the Jungle’. Back to ‘The Papers’

24 October Friday

Cycle Icklesham + Pett with H.J. Glorious day.

November 4 Tuesday

‘The Papers’ cont:

November 13 Thursday

⁵⁴ Qtd. in H. Montgomery Hyde, *Henry James at Home* (London: Methuen, 1969), p.148.

⁵⁵ Hyde, *Henry James at Home*, p.155.

⁵⁶ ‘The Papers’, p.349, p.348.

⁵⁷ Hyde is thus mistaken in reporting that James and Weld ‘abandoned this form of exercise towards the end of 1901’ (Hyde, *Henry James at Home*, p.155).

Lovely day cycle Winchelsea – Lane – Udimore Rd with Mr. James. Finish ‘The Papers’.⁵⁸

In James’s tale, the journalist Maud Blandy—‘a shocker in petticoats’—is herself a type of disgruntled author, experiencing in relation to dramatist Mortimer Marshal ‘a sharper envy [...] than any her literary conscience [...] had yet had to reckon with’.⁵⁹ The female journalist on her bicycle, whose success was predicated on her visibility, cut at once a threatening, and a sympathetic resemblance to what Jakob Stougaard-Nielson has identified as ‘the promotion of a specific type of author figure’ to which ‘the author’s body became integral’. For James himself, ‘[t]he modern image of the productive author also came with modern mechanical prostheses such as the bicycle and the typewriter’.⁶⁰ With her pretensions to authorship and her involvement—whether as interviewer or typist—in the production of other authors, the New Woman was a suitable ‘figure’ for the simultaneous exposition of the writer’s person and his craft. As one commentator from *Hearth and Home* testily complained, objecting that the ‘vigorously-working legs’ of the ‘knickerbockered sister’ destroyed a ‘delicate illusionment’: ‘We do not all want to see “how it’s done”’. There is always a greater fascination in what is suggested than in what is revealed.’⁶¹

‘The Papers’

It is not incidental that of James’s fictions the bicycle appears with most emphasis in ‘The Papers’, a tale which takes the newspaper world as its subject.⁶² The bicycle’s association with revelation and disclosure at the turn of the century owed its most sustained endorsement to the illustrated newspaper. Where the pages of *Punch* had portrayed it as a fad,

⁵⁸ Diary of Mary Weld, Houghton Library, bMS Eng 1579 (32) v.2.

⁵⁹ ‘The Papers’, p.347, p.328.

⁶⁰ Jakob Stougaard-Nielson, ‘Frontispieces and Other Ruins: The Visual and Textual Culture of Henry James’s New York Edition’, PhD thesis: University of Aarhus, 2006, p.225.

⁶¹ ‘Omnia Vincit Bicycle’, *Hearth and Home*, 17 October 1895, p.808.

⁶² The bicycle also appears in *The Awkward Age*, both literally—when Mitchy inquires of Nanda if she ‘came on a bicycle’—and figuratively, as he declares to Mrs. Brook: ‘Pride’s only for use when wit breaks down—it’s the train the cyclist takes when his tire’s deflated’ (AA p.99, p.66).

featuring early cyclists balancing on circus wheels, the sport now generated ‘a proliferation of cycling journals and magazines’—such as *The Wheeler*, *The Hub*, and *Bicycling News*—devoted to the bicycle’s use and celebrity.⁶³ In fiction, the bicycle retained strong links with the newspaper or periodical. It is part of the cant of Wells’s Jessie Milton, the runaway female cyclist in *The Wheels of Chance*, that she wants ‘to obtain a position as a Journalist’, while Hoopdriver—who displays a talent for sketching—imagines himself as ‘[o]ne of them *Punch* men’.⁶⁴ Jerome K. Jerome’s *Three Men on the Bummel* (1900) likewise intersperses anecdotes about bicycling misadventures with hilarious tidbits from the author’s experiences as a pressman. The same year saw the publication of Lacy Hillier’s *The Potterer’s Club* (1900), a work touted as the first ‘cycling novel’, whose author was both co-editor of *Cycling* and a retired racing champion himself. At the height of its popularity, the bicycle was virtually synonymous with press attention, with newspapers even accused of having ‘manufactured their cycling celebrities wholesale’.⁶⁵ In a 1900 issue of *Cycling*, a journalist conducts an imaginary interview with the bicycle itself, anthropomorphised into a peeved—and rather Jamesian—celebrity:

‘I suppose you’re another of them?’ asked the bicycle, in a tired voice, as the attendant turned away.

‘Another—?’ I repeated, somewhat at a loss.

‘Another expert. This dreadful place seems to be overrun with them.’

‘No, indeed,’ I hastened to explain. ‘I am only a humble seeker after knowledge—a mere picker up of shells upon the vast sea shore of mechanics.’

‘Well, I don’t like that any better,’ the bicycle complained. ‘It sounds too much like a piece out of a paper—and I cannot stand the papers.’

‘Still, I’m sure they’re all very interested in you and your relations,’ I ventured to remark.

⁶³ Frederick Anderson, *Bicycling: A History* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), p.105.

⁶⁴ Wells, *The Wheels of Chance*, p.192, p.97.

⁶⁵ Raymond Raife, ‘Non-Wheeling Theatrical Cyclists’, *Cycling*, 28 August 1897, p.127.

‘Ah! we’ve been too good to them—we’ve made ourselves too cheap, as the saying is,’ mused the bicycle, regretfully.

‘Why, half of them couldn’t have existed without us, and what thanks have we had for it? We’re death-traps, and indecent exhibitions, and we encourage women to be unwomanly, and goodness only knows what else besides. [...]

‘One of the penalties of being famous,’ I murmured.⁶⁶

‘The penalties of being famous’ are ominously threatened throughout ‘The Papers’, a darkly comic detective story in which two Fleet Street journalists, Howard Bight and Maud Blandy, endeavour to track down the vanished celebrity – Sir A.B.C. Beadel-Muffet – whom they suspect has been quite literally hunted to death by the press. The visibility of bodies and bicycles is a prevalent concern of the tale, as the cyclist’s trousered legs and jutting elbows are prominent in connection with an impatience to *be* prominent: ‘the eagerness to figure’ (p.317), whether as a journalist or as a subject for interview.⁶⁷ Thus the would-be famous playwright, Mortimer Marshal, appeals to Maud as one who ‘saw a possible ‘leg up’ in every bush’ (p.343), while one journalist offers to give the other the insider scoop on Beadel-Muffet’s whereabouts because ‘it *would* be for you—only judge!—a leg up’ (p.401). Maud’s efforts to establish media interest in Marshal, meanwhile, constitute ‘uphill work’, as she complains to Bight ‘we seem to get no for’arder’, but only to ‘stick fast’ (p.338).

Maud’s own figure is repeatedly implicated in her journalistic efforts. The nine ‘machines for stretching trousers’ (p.358) which she manages dutifully to record in an interview ‘At Home’, for instance—a kind of meaningless-yet-personal detail—instantly become a comment on her masculine pretensions to success in the workplace: (‘You want to wear *all* the trousers?’ Howard inquires ironically (p.363)). Maud’s figure betrays her liminal

⁶⁶ Hippolyta, ‘A Protest from the Bicycle’, *Cycling and Motoring*, 1 December 1900, p.445.

⁶⁷ The word ‘prominent’—whose literal sense of jutting or extruding aptly describes the ‘angular attitude[s]’ (p.348) of characters—resounds throughout the tale; used by Maud to refer to her efforts with Marshall: ‘to make him prominent; and [...] to remain prominent’ (p.338), and by Howard, with regard to Beadel-Muffet’s ‘special sort of prominence’ (p.333). Beadel-Muffet’s disappearance is also headlined as that of the ‘Prominent Public Man!’ (p.368).

positioning as both agent and inscribed feature of 'The Papers', whose very pages had featured her sailor hat, dysmorphic body, and bicycle as a familiar caricature:

Maud Blandy drank beer [...] and she smoked cigarettes when privacy permitted, though she drew the line at this in the right place, just as she flattered herself she knew how to draw it, journalistically, where other delicacies were concerned. She was fairly a product of the day [...] she was really herself, so far at least as her great preoccupation went, an edition, an 'extra special', coming out at the loud hours and living its life, amid the roar of vehicles, the hustle of pavements, the shriek of newsboys [...] Maud was a shocker, in short, in petticoats, and alike for the thoroughfare, the club, the suburban train and the humble home [...] This was one of the reasons, in an age of 'emancipations,' of her intense actuality [...] the felicity of her having about her naturally so much of the young bachelor that she was saved the disfigurement of any marked straddling or elbowing. (pp. 313-14)

Spared the 'disfigurement of [...] straddling', Maud both embodies and ironically transcends the attitude of the New Woman, self-consciously astride her bicycle. At the same time, the narrator's assurance that Maud exercises the same discretion 'journalistically' as she does regarding her 'bachelor'-like body and habits— 'she drew the line in the right place'— acknowledges the tale's conflation of physical with media exposure. The narrator teeters between issuing a statement of Maud's authenticity— 'she was really herself'—and characterising her as a mass-produced type: 'an edition'.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the scare quotes surrounding the 'age of "emancipations"', and the sketchy, *Punch*-like allusions to the female

⁶⁸ The association of rational dress with subterfuge was a theme of stories like 'Cynthia's Cycling Suit' (1897), in which a Reverend's wife invents a contraption enabling her—by pulling a string—to raise her skirts over her bloomers once a safe distance from the Vicarage (Claxson Bellamy, 'Cynthia's Cycling Suit', in *The Humours of Cycling: Stories and Pictures by Jerome K. Jerome, H. G. Wells, L. Raven-Hill, and others* (London: James Bowden, 1897), pp.77-79). In Jerome K. Jerome's short sketch 'Women and Wheels' (1897), the narrator comforts the distraught husband of a female cyclist. 'He confided in me that he had lost four pairs of trousers in the last fortnight. "They wear them underneath their skirts," he explained; 'but that is only for practice. You mark my words, there will come a day when they will wear them openly"' (Jerome, 'Women and Wheels', in *The Humours of Cycling*, pp.1-3, p.2).

‘product of the day’—a mixture of ‘beer’, ‘petticoats’, and ‘cigarettes’—summarize the woman who, like the newspaper itself, is now equally visible in ‘train’, ‘thoroughfare’ and ‘humble home’.

The tale’s culture of surveillance corresponds to the newspaper’s strategies of dissemination and advertisement, drawing attention to the bicycle as a mobile technology associated with, and at the service of, *The Papers*. It is due equally to their bicycles and to their status as journalists that Howard and Maud are described as having ‘in a peculiar way the freedom of the town’, enjoy a sense of ‘range’, and ‘sometimes went, on excursions that they groaned at as professional, far afield from the Strand’ (p.313). It is in an effort to escape their profession, however, that the pair cycle into the environs of a London park.

The air was full, as from afar, of the grand indifference of spring, [...] and they had bicycled side by side out to Richmond Park as with the impulse to meet it on its way. They kept a Saturday, when possible, sacred to the Suburbs as distinguished from *The Papers*—when possible being largely when Maud could achieve the use of the somewhat fatigued family machine. Many sisters contended for it, under whose flushed pressure it might have been seen spinning in many different directions. Superficially, at Richmond, our young couple rested—found a quiet corner to lounge deep in the Park, with their machines propped by one side of a great tree and their associated backs sustained by another. But agitation, finer than the finest scorching, was in the air for them; it was made sharp, rather abruptly, by a vivid outbreak from Maud. (p.344)

Maud’s ‘vivid outbreak’ is both an admission of flagging career prospects and a protest against her invisibility. Lacking both Howard’s ‘luck’ and his ‘ferocity’ she has been unable to secure any interviews of interest, and ‘could scarce have said [...] what, for a good while, she had really lived on’ (p.345). The Park is pointedly—as well as geographically—‘distinguished from *The Papers*’, yet the journalists’ recreational cycling is consistently

associated with work.⁶⁹ Maud's 'fatigued family machine' for which 'many sisters [had] contended', suggests initiatives like those arranged by *The Wheelwoman*, which 'urged' readers 'to donate their old machines to "working girls' clubs"'.⁷⁰ The use of bicycle slang—an 'agitation, finer than the finest scorching'—resonates with Howard's repeated injunction to Maud to 'sit tight', as the pair continue to discuss the efficacy of staying in, or 'getting out of' *The Papers*.⁷¹

'My advice to you,' he added in the same breath, 'is to sit tight. [...]—!'

She waited a moment. 'You're sick of everything and you're getting out of it [...] Why am I to sit tight when you sit so loose?'

'Because what you want will come – can't help coming. Then, in time, you'll also get out of it. But then you'll have had it, as I have, and the good of it.'

'But what, really, if it breeds nothing but disgust', she asked, 'do you *call* the good of it?'

'Well, two things. First the bread and butter, and then the fun. I repeat it – sit tight.'

'Where's the fun,' she asked again, 'of learning to despise people?'

'You'll see when it comes. It will all be upon you, it will change for you any day. Sit tight, sit tight.' (pp.346-47)

The strategy of 'sitting tight' recalls James's analogy of the novelist's 'close seat' to that of a rider during a hunt: '[T]he competent novelist—that is, the novelist with the real seat—presses his subject [...] as hard as the keen fox-hunter presses the game that has been

⁶⁹ As several critics have noted, while Howard and Maud's meeting takes place on a Saturday, Maud subsequently refers to it as a Sunday. This would be the journalists' day off, and makes better sense in terms of the tale's chronology.

⁷⁰ Herlihy, *Bicycle: The History*, p.274.

⁷¹ A 'scorcher' is 'one who motors or cycles furiously' (*OED*). 'Scorching' was an activity associated with the early image of the speeding cyclist as an antisocial 'cad on castors', but also appeared in the high-speed chase of the detective novel.

started for his day with the hounds'.⁷² The allusion has resonance in the context of Howard and Maud's return to their favourite topic, the search for Beadel-Muffet, for which the pair quickly resort to a common fund of hunting and gaming metaphors.

Journalists who cycle, as opposed to cycling journalists, Howard and Maud nevertheless persistently trope their profession as a cruel variety of 'sport'. The word is reinforced by numerous figurative allusions to athletics—golf, fishing, cycling, hare-coursing, racing, hunting and ballooning—which the journalists employ to refer to 'the terrific forces of publicity' (p.359). Beadel-Muffet's daughters, converted into newspaper fodder, are thus imagined 'hurtling through the air [...] like golf-balls in a suburb!' (p.319) while the gossip-hungry public 'jump' at the proffered bait 'like starving fish' (p.320). The conceit of a foxhunt pervades 'The Papers', as the press seek out Beadel-Muffet, 'hounded' (p.362) and 'driven to bay' (p.397). Foreseeing the public give chase, Howard anticipates 'larks' (p.337)—a word which recalls James's own description of the Derby in 'Two Excursions' (1905): 'Every one is prepared for 'larks.''' The author had been astounded by the media attention the event attracted, 'the space allotted to sporting intelligence' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the extent to which 'the newspapers' were 'filled for weeks'. The 'sporting passion' that had gripped the nation on that occasion, James observed, stemmed from the fact that '“the hunting” is the basis of English society', yet the principal attraction for the author was the spectacle of the crowd rather than the race itself; the opportunity it presented to 'look out for illustrations'.⁷³

For the journalists of 'The Papers', 'sport' is also invariably associated with spectatorship, and—implicitly—with authorship. As Howard exclaims to Maud, 'We're wonderful, you know, you and I together—we *see*. And what we see always takes place [...] [I]t's high sport' (p.332). Early on in the tale, Howard and Maud discuss the potential for Beadel-Muffet's situation to form the subject of 'a short story', 'a novel', or 'a ply' [*sic*]

⁷² 'Winchelsea, Rye, and "Denis Duval"', p.48.

⁷³ 'Two Excursions', *EH*, pp.169-86, p.173, p.170, p.169, p.174, p.170, p.172. 'Larks' is a revision from the original (1877) essay: 'Everyone is prepared for an "outing"' ('Three Excursions', *The Galaxy*, 24 (September 1877), 346-57, p.347).

(p.324). In the Park, renewing the prospect of taking up such ‘imaginative work’, Howard echoes Conrad’s famous authorial imperative by remarking that ‘[t]his job has made me [...] *see*. It has given me the loveliest tips’ (p.347).⁷⁴ To allow Beadel-Muffet to disappear discreetly, on the other hand, would be to ‘lose something very handsome – his struggle, all in vain, with his fate. Noble sport, the sight of it all.’

He turned a little, to rest on his elbow, and, cycling suburban young
man as he was, he might have been, outstretched under his tree,
melancholy Jacques looking off into a forest glade, even as sailor-
hatted Maud, in—for elegance—a new cotton blouse and a long-
limbed angular attitude, might have prosefully suggested the mannish
Rosalind. (pp.348-49)

The authorial privileges of figuring and spectatorship are wrested from Howard and Maud as self-conscious references to Jacques and Rosalind—figures ‘prosefully suggested’—cast the journalists in roles familiar from cycling literature. ‘[S]ailor-hatted’ Maud once more assumes the type of the New Woman. ‘Rosalind’ is also frequently invoked by cross-dressing heroines on bicycles (no doubt because the unchaperoned female cyclist, like her Shakespearean counterpart, considered her disguise a form of protection as well as mischief).⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Howard’s attitude of relaxed spectatorship—‘looking off’ as if at ‘the sight of’ ‘sport’—belies his own treatment and scrutiny as an object for narrative attention. The fact that Bight also assumes a representative category and pose, ‘cycling suburban young man as he was’, suggests that the extensive ambit of *The Papers* reaches into

⁷⁴ In his Preface to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* (1897), Conrad wrote that his purpose was ‘by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel [...] before all, to make you *see*’ (Conrad, *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’: A Tale of the Forecastle* (New York: Doubleday, 1897), p.xiv).

⁷⁵ See, e.g., ‘A Coast and a Capture: A Bicycling Story’, by Virginia Niles Leeds, in which Josephine Howard dons her brother’s cycling costume and takes off on his bicycle. She anticipates her critics by arguing that ‘some of the most charming heroines in fiction, whom no one has ever thought of criticising, have done the self-same thing. Take, for instance, Miss Helen Mar and Consuelo and Rosalind—doesn’t everyone admire them, and are they not considered three very fascinating ladies?’ *The Humours of Cycling*, pp. 85-92, p.86.

even Richmond Park where couples like Maud and Howard embody stylized forms of fashionable exercise. The scene closes with Maud's admission that:

‘... I’m potentially the Papers still. [...] And then I’m other things.’

‘I see.’

‘I’m so awfully attractive’, said Maud Blandy. She got up with this and, shaking out her frock, looked at her resting bicycle, looked at the distances possibly still to be gained. Her companion paused, but at last also rose, and by that time she was awaiting him, a little gaunt and still not quite cool, as an illustration of her last remark. He stood there watching her, and she followed this remark up. ‘I do, you know, really pity him.’

It had almost a feminine fineness, and their eyes continued to meet. ‘Oh, you’ll work it!’ And the young man went to his machine. (p.351)

Standing elegantly beside her bicycle, Maud makes ‘an illustration’; the fashionable woman posing by her bicycle. Here however, the cyclist’s languid figure is undercut by evident strain, ‘gaunt’ and ‘still not quite cool’ from over-exercise. Her fatigue associates itself both with cycling—the use of that ‘fatigued family machine’—and with journalism, as Howard’s exclamation ‘Oh, you’ll work it!’ directly before going ‘to his machine’, emphasizes a word used by the narrator in reference only to the bicycle, the trouser press, and the ‘machine’ at the disposal of ‘The Papers’: the telegraph.⁷⁶ The extent to which the bicycle truly represented a form of leisure—whether it supported the body or exhausted it, was also a popular question which returned again to the issue of authenticity. James’s vignette of the ‘resting bicycle’ in Richmond Park invokes a typically disingenuous cycling poster, not unlike that satirized by Jerome in *Three Men on the Bummel*:

⁷⁶ Stougaard-Nielson emphasizes this word’s significance in drawing attention to ‘the importance of two “machines” that are usually regarded as the outermost exterior of literature and writing [...]: the author’s body and his typewriter’ (Stougaard-Nielson, ‘Frontispieces and Other Ruins’, p.220).

[M]aybe the ‘Britain’s Best’ or the ‘Camberwell Eureka’ stands leaning against a gate; maybe it is tired. It has worked hard all the afternoon, carrying these young people. Mercifully minded, they have dismounted, to give the machine a rest. They sit upon the grass beneath the shade of graceful boughs [...] A stream flows by their feet. All is rest and peace.⁷⁷

As the advertisement obscures the work required of the body by the bicycle, so the tableau of the journalists relaxing with their ‘machines’ attempts to conceal a strenuous industry. While novels like *The Wheels of Chance* represented the bicycle as an escape from or avoidance of the drudgery of work, ‘The Papers’ links even recreational cycling to professional ‘success’. Indeed, Maud credits the day in the Park with having ‘started all abruptly, a turn of the tide of her luck’, one which she pointedly discounts as being ‘in the least [...] in the young man’s having spoken to her of marriage’, but ‘rather [...] the throb of a happy thought that had come to her while she cycled home to Kilburnia in the darkness’, which ‘had made her [...] tired as she was, put on speed’ (pp.351-52). James’s tale represents the modern author’s simultaneous reliance upon, and exposure by, the media as a kind of crisis; a painful but possibly necessary interference. As Howard’s relish for spectatorship is countered by Maud’s disdainful glance at her own ‘awfully attractive’ but extenuated working body, her rebuke of Howard’s cruelty—‘You’ve [...] like everyone else, for that matter, all over the place—“sport” on the brain’—is met sharply by her companion: ““Well”, he demanded, “what is sport but success? What is success but sport?”” (p.350).

‘The Master’s Bicycle’

The coupling of ‘sport’ with ‘success’ anticipates the figure of ‘Henry’s bicycle’, a conceit which rhetorically accommodates both the failed writer and the failed athlete. Like the conspicuously absent journalists of ‘The Papers’, Hemingway negotiates James’s appearance by exploiting his own invisibility: ‘[I]t is not the writer who is sneering as the writer does not appear in the book.’

⁷⁷ Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men on the Bummel*, (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1900), pp.227-28.

The bicycle's connection with a Jamesian aversion to publicity is made more explicit in a much later incarnation of the author, in which the vehicle makes another cameo appearance. In Cynthia Ozick's 'Unfortunate Interview with Henry James' (2005), an 'American lady from that magazine'—as she is introduced by James's manservant—enters Lamb House to find 'James's bicycle, precariously lodged against an umbrella stand in the central hall'. Simultaneously the author himself emerges, confessing that 'I discover myself increasingly perplexed by the ever- accelerating extrusions of advanced women'. With a 'feminine brashness' worthy of Henrietta Stackpole, the interviewer chides James for his descriptions of 'peppy American journalist[s]', for throwing his personal 'papers into the fire', and for his seeming efforts 'to inhibit my line of questioning', to which the author frostily replies: 'Madam, I do not inhibit. I merely decline to exhibit'. After ineffectually confronting a cagey James over his treatment of 'the women in your life', 'the homoerotic question', and other matters humiliating personal, the interviewer 'wordlessly departs'. The last words are spoken by Burgess Noakes, who 'considerately' urges the visitor to '[m]ind the Master's bicycle don't strike you in the shins'.⁷⁸

In this encounter, the awkwardly positioned bicycle seems a conspicuous trope for the 'accelerating extrusions of advanced women', and particularly press women, as it had been in the late nineteenth century. Yet the vehicle belongs to James, and it is his interviewer, and not her retiring and fusty subject, who must avoid tripping over it. This is again a biographical detail, but the vehicle is also instrumental: a domestic item both defensively withholding entry and aggressively poised to 'strike'. Ironically re-appropriated as a figure *for* the Jamesian, 'the Master's bicycle' bars the way to Jamesian mysteries, to the Jamesian domicile, and to James himself.

As an idea and a technology, the bicycle continues to mediate between the author and his public, conveying the figure of Henry James. The author's admission of a 'type-writing and bicycling "secretary-companion"' into his process of composition recognises that his own

⁷⁸ Cynthia Ozick, 'An (Unfortunate) Interview with Henry James', *The Threepenny Review*, 100 (2005), 16-17, p.16, p.17.

continuity would require ‘the intervention of the agent’. Times were changing. ‘We are living on into a world of ghosts and bicyclists’, writes James to Frank Boott, 9 July 1897. ‘Everyone who is not the one is insupportably the other: beginning with myself. I leave you to guess which I am.’⁷⁹ The melancholy joke on ‘insupportable’—not to be borne, but *being* borne, as cyclists necessarily are—indicates the adaptations and alterations necessary for perpetuity.⁸⁰

When James finally ‘overc[a]me [his] dread of the assault of the interviewer’ it was in 1914, as Chairman for the American Motor-Car Ambulance Corps, the war having ‘given the general public [the opportunity] to approach on the personal side some of the distinguished men who have not hitherto lived much in the glare of the footlights’. The article dwells quite as much upon the novelty of James giving an interview as upon the cause he was trying to advertise, and James would find himself comparing his exceptional appearance in this regard to the manufacture of aeroplanes; vehicles drafted mainly for military purposes. The production of the author, James implies, is, like the production of the aeroplane, a necessary exigency:

‘A distinguished English naval expert happened to say to me that the comparative non-production of airships in this country indicated, in addition to other causes, a possible limitation of the British genius in that direction, and then on my asking him why that class of craft shouldn’t be within the compass of the greatest makers of sea-ships, replied, after brief reflection: “Because the airship is essentially a bad ship, and we English can’t make a bad ship well enough.” Can you pardon’, Mr. James asked, ‘my making an application of this to the question of one’s amenability or plasticity to the interview? The airship of the interview is for me a bad ship, and I can’t make a bad ship well enough.’⁸¹

⁷⁹ Houghton Library, bMS Am 1094 (0629).

⁸⁰ Ghosts on the other hand, as HJ frequently notes, ‘walk’.

⁸¹ Preston Lockwood, ‘Henry James’s First Interview’, *The New York Times*, 21 March 1915, pp.3-4, p.3.

Discussing James's particular aversion to the 'popular "author-at-home" feature', Matthew Rubery reports that the public was 'more interested in reading about the lives of authors at the turn of the century than at any previous point in history'.⁸² The car also ministered to this biographical interest in literary figures, making newly accessible the homes and lives of the famous. For Edith Wharton and Henry James, as we shall see, the motorcar was particularly linked to George Sand, while James's own 'motor-story', 'The Velvet Glove', dramatizes the position of a well-known author put-upon by other would-be authors and 'asker[s] for lifts'.⁸³

⁸² Matthew Rubery, 'Unspoken Intimacy in Henry James's "The Papers"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 61 (2006), 343-67, p.352.

⁸³ 'The Velvet Glove', in *The Finer Grain* (London: Methuen, 1910), pp.1-46, p.39.

‘The Lives of Others’: Motoring in ‘The Velvet Glove’ (1909)

‘“Live for others!” That’s my motto in life.’
—Toad, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908)

In Henry James’s late tale, ‘The Velvet Glove’ (1909), an impressionable writer is whirled around Paris in a motorcar by a glamorous socialite seeking endorsement for her vulgar new novel. The story has long been acknowledged an ‘in’ joke between two authors.¹ As James himself admitted to Edith Wharton: ‘the whole thing *reeks* with you—& with Cook, & with *our* Paris (Cook’s & yours & mine)’. Besides you, me, and the chauffeur cosily ensconced in brackets, the author allows that another member was indispensable to the tale’s creation: ‘It wd. never have been written without you—& without “her”’.²

As critics have focussed upon James’s relationship with Wharton as the defining context for the tale, the role of the *other* ‘her’ (the automobile) has received less attention.³ Such readings broke ground in 1971 with Adeline Tintner’s response to the tale as both ‘a mock-epic with a meticulously worked out classical mythology’, and a private missile ‘mounted to launch an elaborate literary joke’; followed by Edel’s discussion of the story a year later in the third volume of his biography of James. Constituting a thorough interpretation of the tale’s stylistic irony and figures of speech, Tintner’s analysis is also biographical in point, tracing the tale’s classical images to references to Wharton that appear

¹ See Jean Frantz Blackall, ‘Henry and Edith: “The Velvet Glove” as an “In” Joke’, *HJR*, 7 (1985), 21-25; Adeline Tintner, ‘James’s Mock Epic: “The Velvet Glove”, Edith Wharton, and Other Late Tales’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 17 (1971-72), 483-99; and Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, pp.697-706.

² 9 May 1909, *Henry James and Edith Wharton: Letters 1900-1915*, ed. by Lyall H. Powers (London: Weidenfeld, 1990), pp.112-13, p.112.

³ Peter Brooks’ epilogue to his book-length study on Henry James and Paris considers the ‘Chariot of Fire’, detecting in the ‘rediscovery of Paris through the movement of the automobile’ in ‘The Velvet Glove’ an ‘erotic response’ reminiscent of James’s own evocations of motor-travel. Like Millicent Bell, Brooks observes that ‘[t]he experience of motoring, to James [...] is an intellectual discovery, a new perspective and understanding of the world’, yet concludes that it arrived too late to have much impact upon his work: ‘For Proust, nearly thirty years younger than James, the motorcar came in mid career. For James, it was the discovery of old age. There is no passage in James’s writing that offers quite the equivalent of Proust’s description of the kinetic transformations of landscape wrought by motoring’ *Henry James Goes to Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp.205-210, p.208.

in James's correspondence between 1906-09, in which '[a]llusions to the motor car as a "chariot of fire", references to Olympians and Olympus, and "whirling Princesses" cluster'. The Princess and Berridge's night-time drive around Paris is likewise identified as 'the Paris that Edith Wharton presented to [James] via her motor car'.⁴ In 1985, Jean Franz Blackall made explicit response to both Edel and Tintner in a 'supplementary' reading of '“The Velvet Glove” as an “in-joke”', with the twofold aim to 'approach James's story with particular regard for its title and for other book titles that occur within it', and to 'consider the implications of this mode of approach for [...] a literary reflection of the relationship between James and Wharton'.⁵

These responses trace the central action of 'The Velvet Glove' – an author's dismay at being exhorted to review a trashy new novel – to a spurious request made of James by an editor to write 'a personality paper' on Edith Wharton.⁶ They also draw upon James's ambivalent response to Wharton's latest novel, *The Fruit of the Tree* (1907), which James deemed faulty in composition, and which 'The Velvet Glove' both alludes to in subject matter (one of Amy Evans's novels is entitled *Top of the Tree*) and, (as Edel and Blackall have argued) implicitly parodies in style.⁷

In such readings, the car features primarily as a Whartonian accessory, a clue by which to identify the tale's 'real-life' heroine. This chapter will suggest that the role of the automobile is more intrinsic, both with regard to the story's ironic posturing as a romance, and to its fixation with the process of revision. John Berridge's fascination with the adventures of mobile strangers in 'The Velvet Glove', I will suggest, can be linked to experiences made possible by the motorcar, whose uncanny status in Edwardian England

⁴ Tintner, 'James's Mock Epic', p.483, p.491.

⁵ While these critics concur, firstly, on the identity of James's motoring Princess as Edith Wharton, and, secondly, that the tale therefore constitutes a 'joke' or parody, readings vary significantly as to how it might have been meant and received. Tintner identifies 'bitter realities' at the tale's 'core', and Edel, 'something deeply mocking and hostile' in its meaning, while Blackall interprets 'The Velvet Glove' as a 'shared' joke rather than at either author's particular expense (Tintner, 'James's Mock Epic', p.484; Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, p.652; Blackall, "“The Velvet Glove” as an “In” Joke", p.24).

⁶ Tintner, 'James's Mock Epic', p.493.

⁷ James's tale was also initially entitled 'The Top of the Tree', as it was sent to Pinker, 4 December 1908 (Horne, *Henry James and Revision*, p.352).

further accounts for its generic ‘otherness’ in literature, inflecting the tale’s ‘supreme strangeness’.⁸



Figure 20: ‘She’

‘The Lives of Other People’

James’s continental adventure with the Whartons, ‘a wondrous, miraculous motor tour of three weeks and a day’ from Paris to Nohant in the spring of 1907, is likely to have provided direct inspiration for the car journey in ‘The Velvet Glove’. To Howard Sturgis James wrote that ‘my three weeks of really *seeing* this large incomparable France in our friend’s chariot of fire has been almost the time of my life. It’s the old travelling-carriage way glorified and raised to the 100th power’.⁹ Nevertheless, he confided to W.E. Norris that winter,

I have just declined a repetition of it inexorably, and it’s more and more vivid to me
that I have as much as I can tackle to lead my own life—I can’t *ever* again attempt, for

⁸ ‘The Velvet Glove’, p.26. A version of this chapter has been published (Alicia Rix, ‘“The Lives of Others”: Motoring in Henry James’s “The Velvet Glove”’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 36 (2013), 31-49).

⁹ To Howard Sturgis, 13 April 1907, *LHJ*, pp.74-76, p.72, p.74.

more than the fleeting hour, to lead other people's. (I have indeed [...] suffered infiltration of the poison of the motor—contemplatively and touringly used: that, truly *is* a huge extension of life, of experience and consciousness. But I thank my stars that I'm too poor to have one.)¹⁰

James's association of 'the poison of the motor' with an inability 'to lead other people's [lives]' is curious. As a self-propelled vehicle, the car's chief selling point was its promise of autonomy. Len Holden points out that the automobile would endure long after its arrival 'as a metaphor for freedom [...] reflective of individualism and the need for control over one's destiny'.¹¹ Wharton's own *Motor-Flight Through France* (1908) opens with a paean to the car for '[f]reeing us from all the compulsions and contacts of the railway, the bondage to fixed hours and the beaten track'.¹² Likewise, enthusiasts such as Rudyard Kipling and Alexander Filson Young championed the independence enjoyed by the motorist over the 'tremendous [and public] organisation' of the train. The latter

absorbs our individuality so that we are whirled along in an embarrassing cloud of companionship; all our fellow-travellers, the guards and enginemen, [...] the invisible and scattered army of cleaners, turners, shunters, lampmen, platelayers, and carriage inspectors, are all conspiring and collaborating in our punctual journey.¹³

The 'embarrassing' yet obligatory presence of other people seemed conversely limited by the motorcar, which as L.J. K. Setright observes, 'offered particularity, so that any member of society with such a vehicle available could at last choose his own starting point and his own destination, [...] and make the journey either alone or in company of his own

¹⁰ To W.E. Norris, 23 December 1907, *LHJ*, pp.86-89, p.86.

¹¹ Len Holden, 'More than a Marque: The Car as Symbol: Aspects of Culture and Ideology', in *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century*, ed. by David Thomas, Len Holden and Tim Claydon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp.28-40, p.29.

¹² Wharton, *A Motor-Flight Through France* (New York: Scribner's, 1908), p.1.

¹³ Filson Young, *The Joy of the Road: An Appreciation of the Motor Car* (London: Methuen, 1907), pp.4-5.

choosing'.¹⁴ The opportunity for an exclusive *tête-à-tête* during a drive with Wharton was frequently seized upon by James. '[O]h, for an hour of the motor again', he exclaims wistfully, the winter after his return from America. Wharton's *The House of Mirth* had just come out. 'I wish we could talk of it in a motorcar: I have been in motorcars again, a little, since our wonderful return from Ashfield; but with no such talk as that'.¹⁵ The motor is earmarked as the site for private exchanges: 'And *how* I want to hear about everything! [...] the translations, the dramatizations, the asphyxiating milieu of H.S.[turgis] [...] & whatever else you may confide to me as we spin', James declares again, in anticipation of Wharton's arrival in England—car in tow—the following year. 'I really am exquisitely grateful [...] for the motor-chance'.¹⁶ The 'motor-chance' guaranteed full disclosure, whereas the drawing room did not. 'I want to miss nothing, & am only troubled lest you shouldn't be able to tell me about John Hugh before my nephew', writes James of Wharton's latest admirer. 'We will appoint at any rate a motor-run for the purpose.'¹⁷ Wharton's own passion for motoring is fondly recalled in her autobiography, *A Backward Glance* (1934):

About this time we set up a motor, or perhaps I should say a series of them, for in those days it was difficult to find one which did not rapidly develop some organic defect; and selling, buying and exchanging went on continuously, though without appreciably better results. One summer, when we were all engaged on the first volumes of Mme Karénine's absorbing life of George Sand, we had a large showy car which always started off brilliantly and then broke down at the first hill, and this we christened 'Alfred de Musset', while the small but indefatigable motor which subsequently replaced 'Alfred' was naturally named 'George'.¹⁸

¹⁴ L.J.K. Setright, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car* (London: Granta, 2004), p.8.

¹⁵ To Edith Wharton, 8 November 1905, *HJLL*, pp.418-22, p.419.

¹⁶ 2 April 1906, *HJEWL*, pp.62-63, p.62.

¹⁷ 16 December 1908, *HJEWL*, pp.104-05, p.104. John Hugh Smith, Powers notes, was a 'prosperous young English banker whom EW had just met' and who 'would become one of her keenest admirers'.

¹⁸ Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, pp.152-53.

Well before its appearance in ‘The Velvet Glove’, the car had become an ‘in-joke’ between James and Wharton—the subject, as well as the repository, of private conversation. In their correspondence, the string of nicknamed motorcars appear as ribald jokes and asides, acquiring identities in their own right. ‘I know of no such link of true interchange as a community of interest in dear old George’, writes James in response to Wharton sending him Karénine’s biography in 1912.¹⁹ The ‘link’ depended, though, upon a mutual interest in strangers, as the cars assumed personhood through ‘the absorbing life of George Sand’, the cross-dressing baroness and author who attained notoriety with her numerous lovers. ‘Alfred’, Wharton’s ‘little sputtering shrieking’ Pope-Hartford, would be followed by ‘Pagello’, after Dr. Pietro Pagello, the doctor who attended de Musset and became briefly Sand’s lover, and then by ‘Hortense’, after Hortense Allart, another French author famous for her liaisons.²⁰ The reference to the cars as mutual acquaintances also served to evoke a shared memory or experience.

Entre temps my thoughts wing their way back to Pagello & his precious freight (have you read the luridly interesting little vol. *George Sand & sa fille* by the way?) & hover about him as he so greatly adventures & so powerfully climbs, *m’attachant à ses pas*, to his flights & his swoops, & even more to his majestic roll in the deep valleys, with a wistfulness in which every one of those past hours lives again.²¹

The car’s association with the ‘luridly interesting’ biography was not incidental. The automobile enabled visits to the once private houses at Nohant and Herblay, former homes of the authors whose lives held more appeal than their literature. James had already found in Sand’s ‘autobiography, her letters, her innumerable Prefaces, [...] a literary title for her far

¹⁹ Qtd. in Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Chatto, 2007), p.223. See Lee pp. 223-24, for an account of James and Wharton’s mutual interest in Sand, and the naming of the cars.

²⁰ Qtd. in R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York: Harper, 1975), p.136.

²¹ To Edith Wharton, 8 November 1905, *HJLL*, pp.418-22, p.421.

superseding any derived from her creative work'.²² And while, as Shari Benstock has observed, James did not consider Sand 'a novelist of the first rank', he 'stood awestruck before "George Sand" (a figure of his imagination)'.²³ '[T]he riddle consists', James wrote of Sand, 'in the irreconcilability of her distinction and her vulgarity'.²⁴ It is the same discrimination that John Berridge strives to impart to the Princess in 'The Velvet Glove', whose romantic life intrigues—as much as her literature bores and offends—his sensibility.²⁵

As Hermione Lee points out, motoring also provided James with the opportunity to observe the Whartons' relationship at close range.²⁶ By 1910, 'Pagello' had been replaced by 'Hortense' and Edith Wharton's marriage to Edward ('Teddy') Wharton was steadily deteriorating. The cars become euphemisms for marital and extra-marital problems. 'I am afraid you are having little rest in your dragging of your car up hill—by which I don't mean at all "her" but only & emphatically *him*', James remarks sympathetically in one missive.²⁷ And in another letter to Wharton from Queen's Acre, where he was staying with Sturgis, James signs off with the report that 'We are starting on a Park walk together—*en attendant Elle et Lui—et vous, Madame à bientôt donc*' ('While awaiting Her and Him—and you, Madame, let's see you soon'). Powers notes that 'Elle et Lui' ostensibly refers to Sturgis's other guests: his sister May and her second husband Sir Bertram Falle. But there is also a nod to *Elle et Lui* (1859), George Sand's 'thinly veiled fictional account of her affair with Musset', so that James's phrasing further 'couples them with E[dith] W[harton] and, by implicit extension, [Morton] Fullerton', the American journalist with whom Wharton was having an affair from 1907.²⁸ In yet another turn of the screw, the two pronouns obliquely evoke the motor and chauffeur whose discretion Wharton and Fullerton—sometimes accompanied by James or

²² 'George Sand', in *Notes on Novelists* (London: Dent, 1914), pp.148-68, p.153.

²³ Shari Benstock, *No Gifts from Chance: A Biography of Edith Wharton* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), p.162.

²⁴ 'George Sand', p.166.

²⁵ For an analysis of the tale's combined themes of illusion and cult authorship see Denis Flannery, *Henry James: A Certain Illusion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). Flannery argues that the tale 'can be read as a treatment of the commodification of the author [...] constructed as an instance of illusion' (p.159).

²⁶ Lee, *Edith Wharton*, p.226.

²⁷ 9 September 1910, *HJEWL*, pp.168-70, p.169.

²⁸ 16 May 1909, *HJEWL*, pp.113-14, p.114.

Sturgis—relied on for their trysts. By this time, ‘the absorbing life of George Sand’ had become a way of referring to the drives that afforded Wharton respite from her marriage.

James was frequently to act as a tactful third wheel during these excursions. In the spring of 1908, Wharton was outlining the ‘possibilities by motor’ to Fullerton whilst also chaperoning James about Paris.²⁹ The following April, Wharton was again in England and had confided in James about the affair. Edel has traced the intrigues that began to unfold behind the ‘bare entries’ of the author’s date diary, all of which record drives—and in particular James and Wharton’s scheme to rescue Fullerton from the clutches of his Parisian mistress and blackmailer, Henrietta Mirecourt. The plot involved Wharton persuading Macmillan to offer Fullerton a book deal she herself had turned down, and forwarding an advance (through James) to the publishing house. The covert transfer of information via motorcar demonstrates its role, unprecedented by other vehicles, in private affairs. As Edel reports, James had found himself ‘at the centre of a series of *liaisons dangereuses*’.³⁰

Both as a physical space guaranteeing confidential discourse, and as a trope for private meaning in itself, the car’s function anticipates its more than ornamental presence in ‘The Velvet Glove’. James once declared that ‘the only way’ to experience the automobile was ‘from within’, a remark that suggests his recognition of the motorcar as an exclusive site at which privileged knowledge is exchanged.³¹ Yet it also recalls the author’s somewhat awkward characterization of the presences attending the tale’s genesis—‘never [...] without you, and without *her*’—in a way that hints at the car’s use to dramatize the tale’s politics of inclusion and exclusion, a joke or secret that not everyone is ‘in’ on.

‘She’

The automobile’s risqué associations were not unique to James and Wharton. The treatment of cars as romantic entanglements was a common conceit that underscored both the

²⁹ Qtd. in Lee, *Edith Wharton*, p.315.

³⁰ Edel, *Life of HJ*, II, p.702. The ‘plan’, as Powers notes, was ‘concocted en route to Chichester’ (*LHJ*, p.16).

³¹ Qtd. in Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography*, p.140.

vehicle's promiscuity as an item of constant renewal and exchange, and its histrionic liability for breakdowns. Kipling recounts his experiments with an early steam car as the trials of a fascinating but temperamental mistress: 'Jane Cakebread Lanchester [...] was her dishonourable name'. 'Jane' was distinctly high maintenance—'She reduced us to the limits of fatigue and hysteria, all up and down Sussex'—and soon replaced: 'Next came the earliest Lanchester, ['Amelia'] whose springing, even at that time, was perfect'. But the car was still an evolving and relatively unknown entity, and 'no designer, manufacturer, owner, nor chauffeur knew anything about anything'.³²

Reactions to the motorcar were polarized between a resistant majority and its few, wealthy adherents. Commercially, as David Thoms notes, these early cars had 'limited market appeal', remaining in private circulation as the toys of an exclusive club.³³ As a result, they were regarded with curiosity, and often with distrust, by non-members: 'I am surprised to find that it is impossible to hire a car in these parts; indeed I have never seen one about', complained one correspondent in 1899, adding that 'the present position of the motorcar industry does not induce much faith in outsiders'.³⁴ Coterie gatherings to discuss the latest cars ensured the motor's insinuation into the homes and lives of the wealthy, and the exchange of gossip as private vehicles and chauffeurs were borrowed and exchanged. The motor was a source of dubious interaction and tall tales. 'I have noticed that everyone who possesses a motor is prepared to sell it', writes a Mrs. Aria, in her *Autobiography of an Automobilist* (1906). 'The offer, "What is mine is yours" is written largely over the advice he will give you, while the newer-model bait lures him to fables not unworthy of Munchausen.'³⁵ An article in the *Times* 'On Choosing a Motorcar' (1907), urged 'constancy' upon the prospective buyer, offering the maxim that, as 'both professions and wives are of this world

³² Kipling, *Something of Myself: For My Friends Known and Unknown* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p.133, p.134. Kipling wrote to HJ, who was apparently thinking of buying a car, to forewarn him of the motor's treachery.

³³ David Thoms, 'Motor Car Ownership in Twentieth-Century Britain: A Matter of Convenience or a Marque of Status?', in *The Motor Car and Popular Culture*, pp.41-49, p.41.

³⁴ 'The Motor Industry', *Cycling*, 28 January 1899, p.59.

³⁵ Mrs Aria, *Woman and the Motorcar: Being the Autobiography of an Automobilist* (London: Appleton, 1906), p.11.

and human, fraught with the defects of their qualities', so 'Motorcars are also of this world, and more human than they seem'.³⁶

As one who reportedly 'took advantage, to the last drop of petrol, of [...] any visitor's car', James experienced several types of vehicle, including 'a charming Napier' to Herstonceux, a 'wondrous Renaud that has the belly of an elephant & yet takes the steep hills like a swallow' around Kent, and Wharton's own Panhard-Levassors of luxury French design.³⁷ It was to her car above all others that James jokily pledged his allegiance, and while kept diverted in the interim by 'a little hareem of "She's"' put at his disposal by kindly friends, it was 'for the Gran' Turca herself that I truly yearn—even while I all submissively await her good pleasure'.³⁸ 'She' slips into gatherings as the guest of honour: '[I] could come out to a tea or lunch, or even a dinner, with Howard [Sturgis]—especially if *She* should be with you & open her arms & wings to, & for, me.'³⁹ Yet Her penchant for 'going forth again on new & distant & expensive adventures' also filled James with 'absolute terror & dismay—the desire, the frantic impulse of scared childhood, to plunge my head under the bed-clothes & burrow there, not to 'let it (i.e. *Her!*) get me!'⁴⁰

James's comical attitudes of mingled awe and terror typify his references to Wharton herself—the 'Firebird' or 'Angel of Devastation'.⁴¹ Yet such discrepant reactions—those of expectant lover and frightened child—also reflect a widely felt ambivalence to the motorcar. Somewhat inconsistently, cars were referred to both as familiar household members (children,

³⁶ 'On Choosing a Motor-Car', *The Times*, 23 April 1907, p.3.

³⁷ The 'Renaud' and 'Napier' appear in letters to Wharton: 4 October 1907, *HJEWL*, pp.74-76, p.75, and 20 August 1909, pp.120-21, p.120. Wharton rather tartly remarks on James's reliance on lifts in *A Backward Glance* (p.248).

³⁸ 11 June 1913, *HJEWL* pp.256-58, p.257.

³⁹ 29 July 1910, *HJEWL*, pp.164-165, p.165.

⁴⁰ 27 September 1911, *HJEWL*, pp.192-94, p.193.

⁴¹ '[T]he Angel of Devastation (as Howard Sturgis & I unanimously dub her) Mrs. Wharton, [...] arrived day before yesterday by motor-car from Paris & Folkestone, departed this morning, after 36 most genial hours here, only with the pledge that I will join her at Windsor (Howard S.'s) on Thursday (this is Tuesday) to motor with her up to Wemmergill, the Charles Hunters' Yorkshire place, there to spend 4 or 5 days—motoring again, so far as we can, over the region' (To Mrs William James, 23 July 1912, *Dear Munificent Friends*, pp.87-91, p.89); 'They are all—the Firebird, Frank S., Claude P., and their respective cars to cross from Folkestone together tomorrow' (To Howard Sturgis, 9 August 1912, *HJL*, IV, pp.622-23, p.623).

pets, wives) and as exotic creatures uneasily harboured within the nuclear family.⁴² The turnover of motors amongst the Whartons paralleled that of house-keepers at Lamb House: 'I hope the Neo-Paddington surpasses the original as far as the new 50 hp. Mercedes excels our old plodding Hortense. Come & See!!' quips Wharton jubilantly in a postcard to James during a motor-tour of Italy.⁴³ The foreign origins of the car—an import monopolized by German and French manufacturers—temper even the fondest accounts of its adoption.⁴⁴ In *Howards End* (1910), the production of cars and heirs is alike represented as the business of early twentieth-century patriarchy. Charles Wilcox and his wife Dolly sit on their lawn while 'their motor [...] regard[s] them placidly from its garage [...] A short-froaked edition of Charles also regards them placidly; a perambulator edition is squeaking; a third edition is expected shortly'.⁴⁵ Despite the automobile's creaturely and domestic presence, Andrew Thacker points out that '[t]he rubber wheels of the Wilcox's motor cars were first invented in 1888 by John Dunlop', and that 'Henry Wilcox's work for the Imperial and West African Rubber Company connects the novel to the production of imperial spaces abroad'.⁴⁶ Likewise, James's characterization of the Whartons' 'india-rubber-tyred' car as an exotic courtesan—the Gran' Turca' paid for with a 'fortune'—emphasizes its origin as a product of overseas trade.⁴⁷

The motorcar's unpredictability was another source of its otherness. The subject of vexed appeal for the uninitiated ('Motor, motor, little car! / How I wonder what you are') the car also appears as 'a really savage beast' even for seasoned drivers: an 'imp' of 'cranks' and 'pranks'.⁴⁸ Motorists themselves were regarded as a breed apart, with their swapping of technical terms, addiction to speed, and peculiar get-up. James's mock alarm at the deluge of strangers anticipated in Wharton's Parisian *salon*—'Let me come, please, utterly incognito & masked wholly in motor-goggles'—invokes a standard joke on the attire that made adherents

⁴² See, e.g., 'Mellidrop's Motor-Car', *The Captain*, (date unknown), p.210. 'Mellidrop has kept all sorts of pets, and has given them up one by one. His latest pet was a motor-car'.

⁴³ 23 August 1909, *HJEWL*, pp.121-23, p.122.

⁴⁴ Harold Perkin, *The Age of the Automobile* (London: Quartet Books, 1976), p.8.

⁴⁵ E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (Toronto: Briggs, 1911), p.182.

⁴⁶ Andrew Thacker, 'E.M. Forster and the Motor Car', *Literature and History*, 9 (2000), 37-52, p.45.

⁴⁷ 4 October 1907, *HJEWL*, pp.74-76, p.75.

⁴⁸ 'Kindness to Animals', *Punch*, 24 October 1900, p.291; 'The Motor Car', *Fun*, 11 September 1900, p.87.

difficult to distinguish under layers of furs and elaborate facial contraptions.⁴⁹ Yet as Julian Pettifer and Nigel Turner have shown, as the craze for motoring set in, '[c]ars brought people together into friendly association. Motorists pulled each other out of the mud, swapped stories and explored each other's territory, and there developed a camaraderie of the roads, with its own etiquette and jargon'.⁵⁰

The motorcar's paradoxical associations with both 'camaraderie' and strangeness lent it to uncanny literary forms; variations on familiar themes. Writers like Kipling explored the car's oddity in farce ('Steam Tactics' (1904)), satire (*The Muse Among the Motors* (1900-30)) and the ghost story ('They' (1904)). James's almost prosopopoeic use of the motorcar to talk 'through' other people in his correspondence is a strategy employed in a different context by Kipling, whose parodic collection of car verses assumes the voices of famous poets throughout the ages. 'The Velvet Glove', whose delivery is likewise mock-heroic, also concerns the representation of the self through others. At the car window, Berridge bids goodbye to the Princess, enjoining her not to speak—and above all not to write—but to let others write about *her*: 'Leave [it] to us [...] *We'll* do the rest' (p.42).

'Friends of the Fleeting Hour'

James had returned from his motor-trip with the Whartons in 1907 resolute that, his 'own life' being enough, he could not 'ever again, for more than the fleeting hour, attempt to lead other people's'.⁵¹ For the protagonist of 'The Velvet Glove', a chance encounter with 'friends of the fleeting hour' (p.12) serves to illustrate the necessity of the writer's detachment. Other people are both a lure and a conundrum for 'Poor John Berridge', a British author enjoying recognition for his 'slightly too fat' novel, *The Heart of Gold*, who finds himself circulating amongst artists and celebrities at a dinner party in Paris (p.1). Approached by an ingratiating 'young Lord' (p.1), who wants him to take a look at his friend's new novel, Berridge is distracted by the conviction of their having met before, 'by some chance of travel'

⁴⁹ To Edith Wharton, 29 March 1908, *HJEWL*, pp.96-97, p.97.

⁵⁰ Julian Pettifer and Nigel Turner, *Automania: Man and the Motor Car* (London: Collins, 1984), p.16.

⁵¹ To Howard Sturgis, 13 April 1907, *LHJ*, pp.74-76, p.74, p.75.

(p.5). The arrival of the lady novelist—‘this charming, this dazzling’ Princess—supplies ‘the missing connection’, as the other ‘member of the couple disturbed [...] on his being pushed by the officials, at the last moment, into a compartment of the train that was to take him from Cremona to Mantua—where, failing a stop, he had had to keep his place’ (p.11). Then he had been captivated by the attractive pair, ‘friends of the fleeting hour though they had but been’ (p.12). Now he is struck by their interest in *him*, as the Princess instantly monopolizes Berridge, whisking him off for a spin in her motorcar.

A disorientating sense of flux pervades the tale from its opening scenes, which are sprinkled with images of mass tourism.⁵² The worldly company that surrounds Berridge resemble ‘a steamboat deck, or a herd of fellow-pilgrims cicerone-led’ (p.8), Amy Evans’s novel is ‘a washed-up ‘Kodak’ from a wrecked ship’ (p.23), and the ‘great Dramatist’ whose talent and acclaim Berridge despairs of approaching turns on him the ‘high Atlas-back of renown’ (p.15). As he works the room in a sort of daze, Berridge is subject to lapses of memory, as if suffering from ‘some impression of a sharp earthquake-shock or [...] an attack of dyspeptic dizziness’ (p.25). There are ‘space[s] of time of which he was afterward to lose all account’ (p.18), and misplaced assumptions, for instance ‘that they—the Princess and he’ had travelled ‘such millions of miles, or at least such thousands of years’, in their acquaintance (p.20).

The tale’s hectic disruptions of time and space work as a narrative strategy deferring comprehension, as Berridge’s increasing disorientation manifests in failures to interact with others, and the possibility of communication remains ever present, yet tantalizingly withheld. The author is assaulted by an ‘association as tormenting [...] as it was vague’ (p.5), as the young Lord provokes a memory of ‘something caught somewhere’ in recent travels (‘as he had moved about’ (p.4)), but is himself too mobile to fix—‘there was no placing this figure of radiant ease’ (p.8). Berridge’s impression of his new acquaintance as ‘restlessly headlong’ (p.7) suits his memory of their meeting somehow in transit: ‘through Sicily, through Italy,

⁵² Philip Horne notes that ‘[c]onfusion, which in various aspects is to dominate the tale, is in the air already’ (Horne, ‘Henry James and *The English Review*’ in *Ford Madox Ford, Modernist Magazines and Editing*, ed. by Jason Harding (New York: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 25-52, p.37).

through the south of France' (p.5). The vague formulation is suggestive of what Thacker, borrowing a phrase from historian William Plowden, has discussed as an attention to 'through traffic' in the early years of motoring, whereby '[p]eople now increasingly passed through places, perhaps glancing briefly at the sights, but not entering into any more permanent relationship [...] than that of the speeding voyeur'.⁵³ A series of unaccounted for 'separations' between Berridge and the Princess occur, seemingly only to invoke the charged prospect of their 'reunion', as the tension between 'meeting and wanting to meet' induces her to cross the space between them in a series of remarkably vivid passages, 'coming straight to him across the empty place as if he alone [...] were what she incredibly wanted' (p.25), or being 'brought [...] straight across the room to speak to him' following Berridge's conviction of things 'coming indeed, with an immense stride' (p.13).

The author's compulsion to simultaneously close and create distances between himself and others indicates a fundamental inconsistency. Berridge displays an urgent desire for identification with others, even as he condescends to them as his intellectual inferiors: 'That was the disservice, in a manner, of one's having so much imagination: the mysterious values of *other types* kept looming larger before you than the doubtless often higher but comparatively familiar ones of your own' (p.5 my emphasis). The car journey is marked by such 'looming' close-ups—the Princess 'brushe[s] [Berridge] at their close quarters' (p.36), they grasp hands (p.40), and he can hear and feel her 'close cool respiration' (p.38)—a proximity unusual for James's characters, and an effectual contrast to the tale's spasms of sudden, sickening estrangement.

Nothing stranger could conceivably have been, it struck him [...] than this exquisite intimacy of her manner of setting him down on the other side of an abyss. It was as if she had lifted him first in her beautiful arms, had raised him up high, high, high, to do it, pressing him to her immortal young breast while he let himself go, and then, by some extraordinary effort of her native force and her alien quality, setting him down

⁵³ Thacker, 'E.M. Forster and the Motor Car', p.40.

exactly where she wanted him to be—which was a thousand miles away from her.

(p.37)

At once ‘native’ and ‘alien’, a source of ‘exquisite intimacy’ and exhibiting a behaviour than which ‘nothing’ could be ‘stranger’, the Princess moves Berridge back and forth through dizzying lurches of space. With the unsettling communication of her demand (a ‘friendly, irresistible, log-rolling Preface’ (p.36)), the author imagines himself ‘lifted’ through the air, now ‘press[ed] [...] to’ his companion, now shifted ‘a thousand miles away from her’, now ‘preposterously face to face with her’ again (p.37). Such oscillations recall James’s ‘terror of the pendulous life’ that he associated with the Whartons.⁵⁴ Yet they also describe the manner in which Berridge learns the Princess’s true purpose—and identity—as ‘Amy Evans and an asker for “lifts”’ (p.39). The revelation of her motive only increases Berridge’s bewilderment: “‘Where are we, where, in the name of all that’s damnably [...] grotesquely delusive, are we?’” he said, without a sign, to himself; which was the form of his really being quite at sea as to what she was talking about’ (p.36).

Berridge’s helplessness is not solely romantic but relates to a literal disorientation, his unease at having surrendered ‘his own constantly-prized sense of knowing [...] his way about’ (p.33). As a passenger, James also seems to have found this aspect of motor-travel troubling. Wharton would describe her friend’s ‘sense of direction’ as ‘actively but always erroneously alert’ when, during drives around Sussex, James insisted on swapping places with ‘Teddy’ to sit beside Cook in order to navigate him, with little success, towards Lamb House.⁵⁵ Wharton herself struggled with not being in the driver’s seat, or in Percy Lubbock’s words, ‘exclu[d]ed from the helm’. Authoritative by nature, Lubbock relates, ‘nothing was more difficult to Edith than to sit submissive and inactive behind her driver; it

⁵⁴ To Mrs Henry White, 29 December 1908, *LHJ*, pp.120-22, p.121. In another letter, to Howard Sturgis, HJ reports ‘feel[ing] myself far aloft in irresistible talons and under the flap of mighty wings—and about to be deposited on dizzy and alien peaks. “Take me *down*—and take me home!” you saw me having to cry that, too piteously, the other day to the inscrutable and incomparable Cook—rescuer as well as destroyer’ (To Howard Sturgis, 9 August 1912, *HJL*, IV, pp.622-23, p.623).

⁵⁵ Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, p.240.

was an abdication in the conduct of her affairs that seemed always unnatural'. James, meanwhile, 'was distressed by [Wharton's] lightning reversals and rearrangements of settled plans. How are you ever to know where you are, if, wherever you are, you can *always* change your mind and go elsewhere?' Though a passenger, Wharton demonstrated a facility with the motor that 'claimed [...] its blind obedience to her command' and 'grasped [the car] with a clear understanding, not indeed of the mere machinery of its action, for which she cared nothing, but of the opportunity of its power'.⁵⁶

The Princess's car seems likewise to function as an instrument of her control over Berridge (his submission is marked on entering the vehicle—at which he instantly abdicates 'independence of thought' (p.32)). Also resonant with James's own experience of motor-travel, however, are the passages where Berridge's vague perceptions are subject to bouts of ecstatic apprehension, giving way to 'prodigious extensions', while the narrator affirms that his 'eyes were quite aware [...] of missing everywhere no more of the human scene than possible', and of being 'particularly awake to the large extensions of its spread before him' (p.1). Such broadening horizons recall James's attribution of an 'extension of life' and 'consciousness' to the motorcar, which afforded him, as Millicent Bell notes, 'an augmented ability to see, extending that precious capacity of awareness [...] which the novelist in him prized above everything else'.⁵⁷ As James would simultaneously celebrate the car's 'extension' of perspective and balk at its embroilment in the lives of 'other people', so Berridge's disillusionment at the Princess's 'motive' ('disconcerting, deplorable, dreadful') is 'in respect to the experience, otherwise so boundless, that he had taken her as having opened to him' (p.35).

In his discussion of the motorcar in *Howards End*, Thacker identifies the disorientation experienced by Forster's characters as a consequence of changes in the 'experience of basic categories of time and space' following the advent of motorized transport. These, he argues, have a profound impact on the structure of the novel, shaping its

⁵⁶ Lubbock, *Portrait of Edith Wharton* (London: Cape, 1947), p.85, p.68, p.69.

⁵⁷ To W.E. Norris, 23 December 1907, *LHJ*, pp.86-89, p.86; Millicent Bell, *Edith Wharton and Henry James: The Story of their Friendship* (London: Owen, 1965), p.92.

dialectic of 'flux and form'.⁵⁸ A similar tension characterizes the narrative stops and starts of 'The Velvet Glove'. As if in reaction to its characters' constant restlessness, the story is also marked by a strenuous insistence that people stay put: Berridge, 'pushed by officials', is enjoined 'to keep his place' in the train; hand-held by the Princess, he is detained in her motorcar (p.34). Stillness is likewise figured as restraint when a singer arrests the company at the studio 'in [a] rapt attitude', and the seated guests 'composed' for the grateful author, 'in their stillness', briefly offering him the chance to fit 'the whole thing together' (p.9) (the moment coincides with the arrival of the Princess, and a temporary relief in placing his companion as hers). Defying stasis, Berridge's eyes 'range' and 'soar' over the motionless guests in 'a flight [...] sublime' (p.10), while 'the rest of consciousness was held down as by a hand mailed in silver' (p.9). Again, on his introduction to the Princess, Berridge imagines himself as one of the 'plastic people' from *The Winter's Tale*, 'petrified before fifty pairs of eyes, to the posture of a prepossessing shepherd' (p.20).

The tale's association of stillness with artifice invokes what Paul Virilio has identified as 'the notion that representation [...] essentially depend[ed] on, in the West, until the innovation of the motor', namely that '*immobility makes visible*. The plastic arts [...] immobilize[d] movement, thereby *offering the illusion of seeing, of having the time to see*'.⁵⁹ Not having the time to see was, on the other hand, a persistent anxiety of motor-travel in the early twentieth century, reflected in James's condition that the car be 'contemplatively used', and in his tale's own equation of stillness with the submissive and interpretable art object. At the end of 'The Velvet Glove', Berridge looks in on the Princess in her motor as if at a statue, 'in her screened narrow niche' (p. 41).

Travel moves across private boundaries in the tale, but also generic ones, as Berridge's foray into the world of Romance, through an 'enchanted city' and 'of a wondrous bland April night' (p.33), recalls Kipling's characterization of the car as a 'time machine on which one can slide from one century to another at no more trouble than the pushing forward

⁵⁸ Thacker, 'E. M. Forster and the Motor Car', p.39, p.49.

⁵⁹ Paul Virilio, *The Art of the Motor*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p.69 (original emphasis).

of a lever', into 'a land full of stupefying marvels and mysteries'.⁶⁰ Berridge's murmured assent to the Princess's suggestions of what course they take—'As you like, [...] where you will' (p.32)—makes partial and tweaked reference to two Shakespearean romances that likewise move from a confusion to a revelation of identity, while the passenger's experience of the car journey fluctuates between 'assurance' and 'wonder'. Initially, Paris is set on legible 'course' by the motor: 'the great scroll of all its irresistible story, pricked out [...] in syllables of fire' (p.33). And Berridge finds in the car's representation of the city a gratifying confirmation: '*That* was knowing Paris [...] that was all of the essence of fond and thrilled and throbbing recognition, with a thousand things understood and a flood of response conveyed' (p.33). Motor-travel is experienced as the blessed reciprocity of conversation, a form of 'recognition' that is also a condition of 'knowing'. Yet Berridge's abandonment of his own 'constantly-prized sense of knowing' (p.33) also distracts him from grasping the true nature of Amy Evans's proposition:

'You've been asking me if I wouldn't write you a Preface?'

[...]

'But, heaven help us, haven't you understood?' (p.36)

As Tintner observes, bewilderment in 'The Velvet Glove' is strategic, with 'the complete revelation not taking place until the final tête-a-tête in the motor-car'.⁶¹ In this sense, Berridge's journey traces the reader's own progress from confusion to revelation. James also exploits the liminal space of the car to address a writerly anxiety, however, marking out the boundaries between his own tale and Amy Evans's eponymous Romance.

⁶⁰ 'Letter from Mr. Rudyard Kipling', in *The Complete Motorist*, ed. by A.B. Filson Young (London: Methuen, 1904), pp.281-88, p.286.

⁶¹ Tintner, 'James's Mock Epic', p.487.

‘*The Proper Vehicle of Passion*’

The motorcar’s rapid association with courtship and sexual license has been well documented.⁶² As Pettifer and Turner have shown, the experience of newfound speed was itself thrilling, as were the opportunities the car presented as a mobile and private space without the complications of stabling and feeding traction animals. Advertisements of ‘boudoir-cars’ with increasingly elaborate and seductive interiors, and lurid romances in which ladies eloped with their drivers were in circulation from the early twentieth century, though these usually required that the chauffeur reveal himself to be an aristocrat in disguise.⁶³ Thus, in *Sylvia’s Chauffeur* (1911), the sporting Lord Medenham swaps places with his driver on the way to the Derby, and promptly falls in love with his pretty American passenger, a Miss Vanrenen, who in turn thinks her chauffeur looks ‘very smart in his tight-fitting uniform’.

The girl’s astonished gaze travelled from Medenham to the spick and span automobile. For the moment he had forgotten his role, and each word he uttered deepened her bewilderment, which grew stronger when she looked at the Mercury. The sleek coach-work, and spotless leather upholstery, the shining brass fittings and glistening wings, every visible detail, in fact, gave good promise of the excellence of the engine stowed away beneath the square bonnet.⁶⁴

The focus on the chauffeur in these stories is not incidental, for as the ‘other’ member of the company he represented the enigmatic stranger that the narrative transformed into its hero, conforming to the mandate of romance in assimilating strangeness. Such novels, like James’s tale, repeatedly invoke the stupefying effects of wonder. Though not a chauffeur romance in the traditional sense, ‘The Velvet Glove’ resonates with that genre’s focus on the

⁶² See Pettifer and Turner, *Automania*, pp.181-200. In a letter to Wharton, 17 November 1906, James dubbed the car ‘the proper Vehicle of Passion’ (*HJEWL*, pp.67-68, p.67).

⁶³ Pettifer and Turner, *Automania*, p.181, p.182.

⁶⁴ Louis Tracy, *Sylvia’s Chauffeur* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1911), p.23.

amorous outsider who unwittingly takes another's place in a motor trip. Berridge is thrillingly aware that in driving around with the Princess he is supplanting her habitual travelling partner (and, he imagines, 'her adorer'), the 'young Lord' of the party, who amiably watches the pair depart together (p.15). On a previous occasion, the author had burst in upon that couple closeted away in a train compartment: 'The sense of the admirable intimacy that, having taken its precautions, had not reckoned with his irruption—this image had remained with him' (p.11). Unlike the car, the 'padded corners' of a train cannot guarantee the privacy Berridge now enjoys with his companion (p.11). '[S]hut intimately in together', each author or would-be author kisses the hand of the other, with the Princess's attempt to extract Berridge's promise of a Preface described as a mock seduction (p.257). The tale's final scene of leave-taking positions Berridge outside the car looking in on the Princess.

Their faces were so close that he could practise any rich freedom—even though for an instant, while the back of the chauffeur guarded them on that side and his own presented breadth, amplified by his loose mantle, filled the whole window-space, leaving him no observation from any quarter to heed, he uttered, in a deep-drawn final groan, an irrepressible echo of his pang for what might have been, the muffled cry of his insistence. 'You *are* Romance!'—he drove it intimately, inordinately home, his lips, for a long moment, sealing it, with the fullest force of authority, on her own; after which, as he broke away and the car, starting again, turned powerfully across the pavement, he had no further sound from her, all divinely indulgent but all humanly defeated, she had given the question up, falling back to infinite wonder. (pp. 264-65)

As Philip Horne observes, 'The Velvet Glove' is an ironic tribute to the very type of literature that it resists, an attack upon 'high Edwardian tosh'.⁶⁵ The lurid prose that swims before John Berridge's eyes when he opens Amy Evan's novel—'The loveliness of the face, which was that of the glorious period in which Pheidias reigned supreme, and which owed its

⁶⁵ Horne, 'Henry James and *The English Review*', p.40.

most exquisite note to that shell-like curl of the upper lip' (p.24)—has been read as parodying Wharton's own. But nearer comparisons might be found in descriptions of the motorcar romance, in whose heroine's 'amazingly lovely face the haughty beauty of an aristocrat was softened by a touch of [...] piquant femininity', and whose 'mouth of almost Grecian regularity' is matched only by 'a pair of marvellously blue eyes' which, '[i]n the course of a single second' invoke comparisons 'to blue diamonds, to the azure depths of a sunlit sea, to the exquisite tint of the myosotis'.⁶⁶ If the motorcar represents a species of hack literature in its own right (the 'dear old discredited Romance' (p.27)) then James both satirizes that genre, and situates his own tale squarely within it.

As a physical structure, the car dramatizes such deliberate and ironic slippages of perspective. Berridge's refusal to represent *The Velvet Glove* as a commonplace romance is communicated to the cornered Princess with the audacity of one of Amy Evans's own heroes, while the guarantee 'that he could practise any rich freedom', typical of the vehicle's popular association with seduction, is also affirmed by the narrator's assurance of 'no observation from any quarter to heed'. This statement is itself ironically undermined, for as the couple's over-enclosure in the car at the start of the drive is undercut by the reader's prurient view into its interior, so now the fact that Berridge 'filled the whole window space', ineffectually covering it with a 'loose mantle' serves only to emphasize its spectacular display.

Car literature dwells constantly upon the revelation of identity, suggesting the curiosity the automobile engendered alongside attendant concerns about authenticity. The velvet glove acts as a mask for the iron fist, as the Princess puts pressure on Berridge, revealing her capacity, as Amy Evans, for vulgar negotiating. Berridge anticipates the transformation by way of 'a sudden sharpening chill' at his companion addressing him as one writer to another: 'A "literary friend?"' he echoed as he turned his face more to her; so that, as they sat, the whites of her eyes, near to his own, gleamed in the dusk like some silver setting in deep sapphires' (p.35). The motorist is an implicit, uncanny presence in another late Jamesian story of delayed recognition, 'Crapy Cornelia' (1909), which stages an encounter

⁶⁶ Tracy, *Sylvia's Chauffeur*, pp.20-21, p.20.

between its hero, White-Mason, and an ‘oppressive alien’ who subsequently reveals herself as a former acquaintance. Described as not ‘constitutionally [...] a goggled person; [yet] condemned in New York to [...] frequent violence of transition’, White-Mason assumes (figurative) goggles as a protective defence against the ‘blinding light’ of the modern age.⁶⁷ Yet his goggles also seem to impair his vision, stalling identification of his old friend, Cornelia Rasch.

The car journey in ‘The Velvet Glove’ is likewise marked by an attention to costume. Clothes are unfastened (Berridge’s ‘mantle’ is ‘loose’ and the Princess is likened to a moon covered by the ‘loose veil’ of a cloud (p.41)), or removed, as the author is ‘eased of [his] crush-hat’ and ‘sink[s]’, almost swoons, against ‘the upholstered back of the seat’ (p.37), and the Princess’s glove somehow ‘come[s] off’, permitting her to grasp Berridge’s own hand more closely (p.40). Passengers *en déshabillé* are a feature of motor-farces and songs, where torn veils and displaced gloves indicate a titillating concentration on coverings.

How Flo tore her new motor veil, I can’t say
 But hair-pins and fringe-nets quite gave the show away.
 [...]

 And the Chauffeur found gloves for all his lady loves
 Then the hooter used to say ‘Wow Wow!’⁶⁸

Coverings of a different sort are significant in *The Count’s Chauffeur* (1907), where a motorist and jewel thief hides gems inside a ‘small pile of new, clothbound, six-shilling novels’. These the chauffeur leaves unwittingly in the vehicle, incurring his employer’s indignation: ‘Fancy your leaving those novels kicking about in the car! Somebody might have wanted to read them!’ The complaint is also a jocular reference to the genre of which the

⁶⁷ ‘Crapy Cornelia’, *Harper’s Magazine*, 119 (October 1909), 690-704, p.695. Tintner’s reading of this tale identifies goggles as motoring equipment but only, again, as a ‘Wharton icon’ (Tintner, ‘Metamorphoses’, p.369).

⁶⁸ J. P. Long and Bennett Scott, ‘All The Girls Loved Bertie When He Had a Motor Car’, *English Songs* (London: Star Music, 1914).

novel is part, for at the back of the book are advertisements for the ‘Latest Six-Shilling Novels’, to be had ‘in attractive Coloured Wrappers’, not unlike the brightly-bound volumes—‘blue or green or purple’—that Berridge imagines the Princess selecting from in ‘The Velvet Glove’ (p.251).⁶⁹ The suggestion that the Count’s secret might be uncovered through reading (which would require first entering the car itself) aligns the revelatory experience of the novel-reader with that of the motorist.

Whether the peripherally sensationalist experience of the chauffeur driving a gang of robbers about the Riviera, or the benign interests of the wealthy matchmaker from *Cupid: The Chauffeur* (1908)—who assures her friends ‘that though, of course, I expect some personal enjoyment from my motoring tour, my primary motives in getting it up were altruistic’—the appeal of the motorcar was that of reading itself: its vicarious participation in the lives of others.⁷⁰ Indeed, for the narrator of *My Friend, The Chauffeur* (1905), Mrs Kidder, motoring is a direct substitute for the thrills of novel reading:

I often thought that if I could be free to do exactly as I liked for a month, I’d spend it lying on a sofa among a pile of cushions, with a big box of candy, and dozens of new English society novels. Yet now that I *am* free to do as I like [...] I go gadding around the world at twenty or thirty miles an hour [...] in an automobile. However, it’s just as if I had walked right into a novel myself, to be one of the heroines.⁷¹

Accounts of real motor trips offered similarly sedate opportunities for tourism. In her autobiography, Wharton remembers driving James to see George Meredith, (long ‘deterred’ from a visit ‘by the difficulty of getting from Rye to Box Hill’). Wharton, who had merely wanted ‘a glimpse of George Meredith’s cottage’ and who detested what she called ‘human sight-seeing’, begged to be allowed to remain in the car. James insisted however, and she gave in, crossing the author’s threshold only to find the deaf, recumbent and ‘immobilized’

⁶⁹ William Le Queux, *The Count’s Chauffeur* (London: Nash, 1907), p.104, p.309, p.310.

⁷⁰ Anon, *Cupid—The Chauffeur* (London: Sisleys, 1908), p.1.

⁷¹ C.N. and A.M. Williamson, *My Friend The Chauffeur* (London: Methuen, 1905), p.170.

Meredith immersed in her *Motor-Flight Through France*. ‘I’ve read every word you’ve written, and I’ve always wanted to see you!’ the great man exclaimed. ‘I’m flying through France in your motor at this moment!’ Wharton recalled the incident as being like a revelatory scene from a ‘detective novel’: ‘The invalid stretched out a beautiful strong hand [...] and lifting up a book which lay open at his elbow, held it out with a smile. I read the title, and the blood rushed over me like fire. It was my own.’⁷² The description recalls a corresponding moment in ‘The Velvet Glove’: John Berridge’s instinctive assumption that the volume proffered by his ‘new acquaintance’—the one with the ‘tawdry red cover’—‘could only be *his* book’ (p.20).

‘this process of revision’

Recognition is a pervasive motif of both genres with which James’s tale actively engages; the Romance and the ‘Preface’, or review. The latter famously played a part in the tale’s own inspiration, after James received a request from an editor named Markeley to write a ‘puff’ for Wharton’s latest novel, seemingly at her inclination.⁷³ James’s response is addressed directly to Wharton herself:

Just a word to ask you if the assertion conveyed in the enclosed *is* authentic, & not a vain imagination of the editor? I only want a hint from you [...] to proceed to my little *étude*—to bound to it as if indeed I had Cook at the helm. On that little world in short I shall be able, I think, to ‘picture you up’ as not even he could do.⁷⁴

James humorously boasts that his Preface would rival the scenic value ‘even’ of a motor-run headed by the Whartons’ eminently competent chauffeur, Charles Cook. ‘Picturing up’ was a phrase he had employed of a particularly ‘ineffable’ drive from Rome ‘down to Naples [...]

⁷² Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, pp.252-53.

⁷³ Tintner, ‘The Metamorphoses of Edith Wharton in Henry James’s *The Finer Grain*’, *Twentieth Century Literature*, 21 (1975), 355-79, p.359.

⁷⁴ 30 August 1907, *HJEWL*, pp. 73-74, p.73.

and back' with the Filippi couple in the summer of 1907 — 'a memory of splendour & style & heroic elegance I never shall lose—& never shall renew!' though, James wistfully assures his friend, 'you will come in for it & Cook will picture it up, bless him, repeatedly'.⁷⁵

Both kinds of reviewing—as a critical appraisal and in the literal sense of seeing again—are thus touched upon, and aligned. James was, by this time, himself engaged in a type of revision in which these two senses were equally present. The author had been 'won over to motoring' during his tour of the United States in 1904-05, and his discovery of the car thus roughly coincided with his embarking upon the New York Edition; properly broached between James and Pinker in 1905 whilst the author was gathering impressions for *The American Scene*.⁷⁶ The 'wonder-working motorcar' was instrumental, and James would record 'the great loops thrown out by the lasso of observation' (*AS* p.47), and its ability to 'rope in, in big free hauls, a huge netful of impressions at once'.⁷⁷ To Gosse he reported: 'I am having a most charming and interesting time, and seeing, feeling, how agreeable it is, in the maturity of age to revisit the long-neglected and long unseen land of one's birth—especially when that land affects one as such a living and breathing and feeling and moving great monster as this one is'.⁷⁸ The characterisation recalls the terms in which James described the car itself—as a 'magical monster'—and agent in this process of re-familiarisation: 'I quite thrill with the romance of elderly and belated discovery'.⁷⁹

On his return to Sussex, James found that the motorcar made even '[t]his absurd old England [...] still, after long years, so marvellous to me'. He spent 'four or five splendid October days' with Ned Abbey and his wife—'who have a wondrous French machine'—visiting, with the aid of 'a capacious luncheon-stacked car', a series of 'beautiful old buried houses' about Gloucestershire.⁸⁰ Visually, travelling by car was a revelation, and its novelty did not wane for the author as the years went on. '[N]ever so much as this summer [...] have I

⁷⁵ 11 [and 12] August 1907, *HJEWL*, pp.68-73, p.71.

⁷⁶ To Jessie Allen, 22 October 1904, *HJL*, IV, pp.328-30, p.329.

⁷⁷ To William James, (7 July 1905), *LHJ*, II, pp.35-36, p.36.

⁷⁸ To Edmund Gosse, 27 October 1904, *HJL*, IV, pp.331-33, pp.331-32.

⁷⁹ To George and Fanny Prothero, 13 April 1907, *HJL*, IV, pp.444-45, p.445.

⁸⁰ To Edith Wharton, 8 November 1905, *HJL*, IV, pp.373-76, p.376.

felt the immensely noble, the truly aristocratic, beauty of this splendid county of Sussex, especially as the winged car of offence has monstrously unfolded it to me', he reports to William in August 1909. 'This afternoon an amiable neighbour [...] motored me over to Hurst Monceaux Castle, which, in spite of its being but about ten miles "back of" Hastings, and not more than twenty from here, I had never yet seen.'⁸¹ It was similarly anxious to make up for missed opportunities that James had succumbed to the Whartons' invitation to accompany them on their tour of France in 1907, tempted by his friend's 'unutterable vision of the Nohant that I have all these (motorless) years so abjectly failed to enlighten my eyes withal'.⁸²

Literary revision bears certain affinities with the re-vision afforded by motoring, for what made such excursions 'wondrous' for the author was visiting familiar destinations 'by different ways'.⁸³ The 'ineffable' drive with the Filippis that James relates to Wharton (in the same letter that treats the prospect of writing a Preface for her novel) imparts this emphasis, and James would record the 'approach and return' (from Rome to Naples and back) in 'A Saint's Afternoon and Others' (1909), as a journey undertaken 'by a different wonderful way which I feel I shall be wise never to attempt to "improve on"'. A revision, in other words, that does not need revising.

'We'll go by the mountains', my friend, of the chariot of fire, had said, 'and we'll come back, after three days, by the sea'; which handsome promise flowered into such flawless performance that I could but feel it to have closed and rounded for me, beyond any further rehandling, the long-drawn rather indeed than thick-studded chaplet of my visitations of Naples—from the first, seasoned with the highest sensibility of youth, forty years ago, to this last the other day.⁸⁴

⁸¹ To William James, 17 August 1909, *LHJ*, pp. 139-41, pp.139-40.

⁸² 2 July 1906, *HJEWL*, pp.65-66, p.65.

⁸³ To Clare Benedict, 13 September 1907, *HJL*, IV, pp.459-61, p.460.

⁸⁴ 'A Saint's Afternoon and Others', in *Italian Hours* (London: Heinemann, 1909), pp.345-64, p.357.

James's descriptions of motoring typically thus combine a sense of novelty and difference with that of finish—an experience 'closed and rounded'. Considering 'our latest, our ugliest and most monstrous aid to motion', the author reflects that '[t]o no end is his easy power more blest than to that [...] of achieving for us [...] the grander and more genial, the comprehensive and *complete* introduction' (*IH* p.360). Yet the car's value was also in its wrapping up of an idea so as to preclude 'further handling', and it was following his motor-tours of France and Italy in 1907 that James declared he had renounced both 'for ever'.⁸⁵

His reasoning—that these beloved destinations had suffered 'villainous improvements'—suggests another link between revision and the car, which returned its passenger to the sites of his youth, yet to places which had since undergone alterations (James counts the car itself among such dubious 'improvements' (*IH* p.361)). This tension, as Deborah Clarke notes, inflects the experience of motoring for other authors, who frequently linked the car to the nostalgic restoration of destinations cut off by the railway. Wharton finds the value of the car '[a]bove all' to be in 'recovered pleasures', those of 'surprising' places 'in [...] some intimate aspect of past time [...] hidden for half a century or more by the ugly mask of railway embankments and the iron bulk of a huge station. Then the villages that we missed and yearned for from the windows of the train—the unseen villages have been given back to us!'⁸⁶ Yet as Clarke points out, 'to rediscover the past [...] is not to preserve it. Indeed, the automobile would show scant mercy to the unseen villages. [...] allow[ing] that driver to violate the formerly unseen villages, invading their intimate secrets. What is unseen can be private no more'. This irony—that '[t]he car that brings one back to the past also obliterates it'—is keenly noted by James.⁸⁷ In the same way, the narrator of *The Remembrance of Things Past* recalls revisiting a village by car as an unsettling reacquaintance:

⁸⁵ 11 [and 12] August 1907, *HJEWL*, pp.68-73, p.71.

⁸⁶ Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, pp.1-2.

⁸⁷ Deborah Clarke, *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), p.33.

Like an officer of my regiment who might have seemed to me a creature apart, too kindly and simple to be of a great family, too remote already and mysterious to be simply of a great family [...] so Beaumont, suddenly brought in contact with places from which I supposed it to be so distinct, lost its mystery and took its place in the district, making me think with terror that Madame Bovary and the Sanseverina might perhaps have seemed to me to be like ordinary people, had I met them elsewhere than in the close atmosphere of a novel.⁸⁸

The familiar strangers of ‘The Velvet Glove’ are likewise ‘extraterritorial’ for John Berridge— inhabitants of ‘Olympus’ with whom he comes thrillingly into contact, only for them to prove depressingly mortal. Both this intimacy and strangeness are heightened in the second half of the tale, set within the close confines of the Princess’s motorcar.

‘Not *straight*, and not too fast, shall we?’ was the ineffable young woman’s appeal to him, a few minutes later, beneath the wide glass porch-cover that sheltered their brief wait for their chariot of fire. It was there even as she spoke; the capped charioteer, with a great clean curve, drew up at the steps of the porch, and the Princess’s footman, before rejoining him in front, held open the door of the car. She got in, and Berridge was the next instant beside her; he could only say: ‘As you like, Princess—where you will; certainly let us prolong it; [...] strange and beautiful as it can only be! [...]’ So he spoke, in the security of their intimate English, while the perpendicular imperturbable valet-de-pied, white-faced in the electric light, closed them in and then took his place on the box where the rigid liveried backs of the two men, presented through the glass, were like a protecting wall; such a guarantee of privacy as might come—it occurred to Berridge’s inexpugnable fancy—from a vision of tall guards around Eastern seraglios. (pp.32-33)

⁸⁸ Marcel Proust, *The Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, 3 vols (London: Chatto, 1981), II, p.1037.

The description of the car marks out a subtly contradictory space: ‘a guarantee of privacy’ which the Princess will use to induce Berridge to address the public on her behalf (or, as she later puts it, ‘to say it all out, beautifully and publicly’ (p.36)). On the one hand, a pervasive interiority characterizes their progress, ‘sheltered’ together ‘beneath the [...] glass porch-cover’ before being further ‘closed in’ to the glass-walled ‘box’ of the car. A series of reinforcing plosives (prolong, perpendicular, presented, protecting, privacy) evoke the sputter and purr of the motor, whose stertorous voice James elsewhere refers to thus (‘puffingly, pantingly, pausingly’) while their inherent prepositional grasp (pro-per-pre-) suggests Berridge’s strenuous manipulation and arrangement; an almost asphyxiating, breathless cosiness.⁸⁹

This assumption of ‘privacy’ is itself enforced by strangeness, however, as the anonymous chauffeur and the footman testify to the presence of others: ‘the two men’ whose military uniform and ‘rigid’ posture both emphasize the seclusion of the immured couple and ironically refute it. As language itself—‘the security of their intimate English’—is staked out as another secluded space for them to occupy, the ‘footman’ of two sentences previous becomes an alien *valet-de-pied* who ‘closes them in’. The ‘white-faced’ servant elsewhere implies otherness in James (the demonic Peter Quint pressing his livid face against the window, for example). Here, the ‘backs presented through the glass’, instead of faces, form at once a discreetly ‘protecting wall’ for the couple’s own discourse and a blank affront to communication altogether.

Berridge’s own discomfiture as both author and passenger-participant (in a Romance!) corresponds to this tension. Entering the vehicle he appears a passive, even abject figure, able only to weakly agree to the Princess’s suggestions of what course they take. Yet the image of the ‘seraglio’ that closes the paragraph is also consciously attributed to Berridge’s own ‘inexpugnable’ creative faculty. This exterior authorial presence is in fact doubly registered,

⁸⁹ In *The American Scene*, James thus considers the ‘big, bold country, with ridge upon ridge and horizon by horizon to deal with, insistently, puffingly, pantingly, pausingly [...]’. The ‘motor, which underwent repair’, makes its explicit appearance in the next paragraph (*AS* p.50).

for the image echoes another James uses in his Preface to *The Spoils of Poynton* (1908), where he finds

... as is apt blessedly to occur for me throughout this process of revision, the old, the shrunken concomitants muster again as I turn the pages. They lurk between the lines; these serve for them as the barred seraglio-windows behind which, to the outsider in the glare of the Eastern street, forms indistinguishable seem to move and peer; 'association' in fine bears upon them with its infinite magic. (*LCFW* p.1143)

The scenes in the motorcar and at the studio partake of the same uncanny atmosphere that characterizes 'this process of revision'. As the returning author identifies himself as both an 'outsider' confronted by 'forms indistinguishable' and in company with 'concomitants', so Berridge has glimpsed the Princess and the young lord before: 'the associated figures' (p.11) whom he is to 'feel [...] renewedly in presence' (p.12). For a gawping Berridge, these familiar strangers remain just out of reach, a 'memory [...] caught somewhere' between the 'folded leaves' of a 'volume' that has been 'opened' and 'stir[red]' (p.4). For the author of the Preface, the forms lurking 'between the lines' both belong to, and are also strangely 'barred' from, their creator, whose 'glar[ing]', 'peer[ing]' presence represents an intrusive voyeurism.

James's tale fizzles with such questions of re-evoked 'association' (regarding the young Lord and Princess about whom Berridge speculates—'Who had they been, and what?'—between the Princess and her pen-name, 'Amy Evans', and concerning the dealings that the author will have with the person or production of either (p.12)). As 'The Velvet Glove' teeters between unfolding a narrative and presenting its own tongue-in-cheek appraisal (the author peering through the window of the seraglio) the car provides a way both of maintaining distance, and vicarious involvement.

As Tintner notes, ‘The Velvet Glove’ was composed following the ‘self scrutiny of the Prefaces’, a fact which reinforces the tale’s own extra-textual sense of commentary.⁹⁰ James’s Preface to *Spoils* shares a particular proximity to the story’s composition and context, for Theodora Bosanquet’s diary notes that James began dictating the tale on 5th December 1907, sending it to Scribner’s a week later on the 12th. During this time, Bosanquet records being ‘much absorbed’ by Mrs Wharton’s ‘very thrilling’ novel, *The Fruit of the Tree*, regarding which James was approached about writing a Preface, and with which, as has been noted, James’s tale parodically associates itself.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Tintner, ‘James’s Mock Epic’, p.484.

⁹¹ [7 Dec., Saturday] After an arduous (for him) morning’s work [...] I read “The Fruit of the Tree” Mrs Wharton’s last book; [8 Dec., Sunday] “Fruit of the Tree” very thrilling – I was quite afraid I should lose some of Mr James’ sentences – but didn’t. He was in quite a nice genial sort of mood; [9 Dec.] Preface got on with rather faster today. I was much absorbed in the intervals by “The Fruit of the Tree” (Diary of Theodora Bosanquet, Houghton Library, bMS Eng 1213.1).

Coda

'His Kind of Traffic'

'We squeeze together into some motorcar or other and we so talk and talk that what comes of it...'

Henry James, deathbed dictation, 12 December 1915

'Shortly after the outbreak of the [First World] war, Mr. James found himself, to his professed great surprise, Chairman of the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps, [then] at work in France'.

[H]e gives it sympathy and support as one who has long believed, and believes more than ever, [...] at this international crisis, in the possible development of 'closer communities and finer intimacies' between America and Great Britain, between the country of his birth and the country, as he puts it, of his 'shameless frequentation'.¹

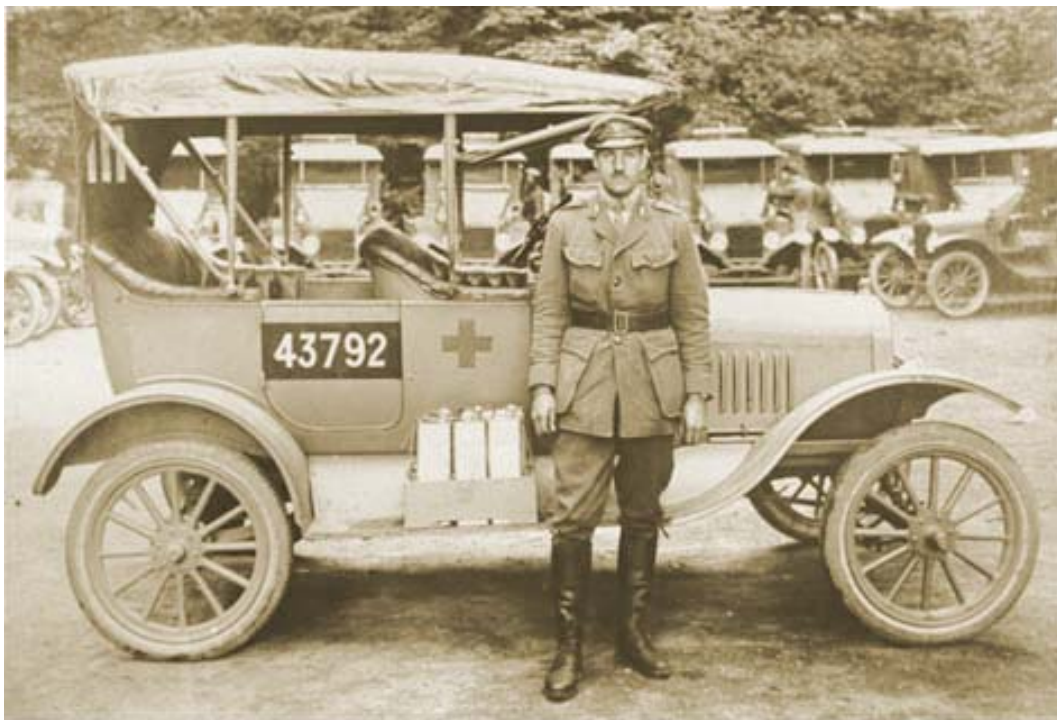


Figure 21 : Richard Norton

¹ Lockwood, 'Henry James's First Interview', p.3.

In this late interview with the *New York Times*—scripted almost entirely, however, by James himself—the author offered his backing of a scheme organized by Richard Norton (son of Charles Eliot Norton) and other ‘Americans in London [...] possessed of cars’, to retrieve wounded British and French soldiers from the battlefield at Neuilly (*fig. 12*). James would also write an open pamphlet in support of the idea, emphasizing ‘the good work [...] exercised [...] by the contribution of Cars’. The value of these vehicles was particular, for the ‘bestrewn [...] victims’ were at places where only ‘a motor-car can workably penetrate’, and James emphasizes ‘[t]he great and blessed fact [...] that conditions of recovery are largely secured by the promptitude and celerity that motor-transport offers, as compared with railway services at the mercy of constant interruption and arrest’.² There is a social dimension to the idea as well. Responding to the question of whether the ‘young men’ acting as chauffeurs mightn’t be motivated by ‘a healthy love for adventure’, James remarked:

I prefer to think of them as moved, first and foremost, not by the idea of the fun or the sport they may have, or of the good thing they may make of the job for themselves, but by that of the altogether exceptional chance opened to them of acting blessedly and savingly for others, though indeed if we come to that there is no such sport in the world as so acting when anything in the nature of risk or exposure is attached.³

The support of an altruistic idea, that of ‘acting blessedly and savingly for others’, acknowledges, almost instinctively, the related pleasures of association. Struck by the possibilities for communication, as well as communion—‘the vivid and palpable social result’—James finds ‘a positive added beauty in the fact that the unpaid chauffeur, the wise

² ‘The American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France: A Letter to the Editor of an American Journal’, in *Within the Rim and Other Essays, 1914-15* (London: Collins, 1918), pp.63-82, p.65, p.66. As James Flink has discussed, American cars had particular advantages, and ‘the most prominent motor vehicle on World War I battlefields turned out to be the rugged Model T.’, as its ability to traverse the ‘typically rutted, shell-pocked and muddy terrain of the combat zones, [...] greatly outperformed the far heavier European touring cars and trucks ostensibly more suitable for military use’ (Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge: MIT, 1988), p.74).

³ Lockwood, ‘Henry James’s First interview’, p.4.

amateur driver and ready lifter, helper, healer, and, so far as may be, consoler, is apt to be a University man'. There is for the author 'so much of strenuous suggestion, which withal manages at the same time to be romantic' in the idea.⁴ In the context, James surely implies a pun on the idea of chauffeurs 'moved'—sentimentally as well as actually—and passengers 'lifted' (in the sense also of 'consoled'), reinforcing the sympathetic link between the transported victims and their affected drivers.

As we have seen, the car's role in bringing strangers into romantic association—and the romance of the chauffeur himself as a figure both familiar and strange—was well established in literature and culture, and also recognised by James himself. Here, enlisting the car in the salvaging and reinforcing of international relations ('between the country of his birth and that of his [...] frequentation') James also hints at the vicarious experience of the motorist: an investment in the lives of others. The rewards for 'the unpaid chauffeur' are sociable and aesthetic as well as moral, and recall, in this sense, the humane and relational interests of James's fictions. It is by such rewards that Maria Gostrey is motivated on behalf of her countrymen, for instance:

I put them through. I pick them up—I set them down. [...] I take people, as I've told you, about. [...] I bear on my back the huge load of our national consciousness, or, in other words—for it comes to that—of our nation itself. [...] I don't do it, you know, for any particular advantage. I don't do it, for instance—some people do, you know—for money. (*A* p.14)

These kinds of inexplicable gains compel Strether himself, forfeiting his own romantic (as well as financial) 'advantage' for a stake in the overwhelmingly interesting and affecting relation between Chad and Mme de Vionnet. As he acknowledges: 'he had been effectually bribed. The only difficulty was that he couldn't quite have said with what. It was as if he had

⁴ 'The American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France', p.68, p.73.

sold himself, but hadn't somehow got the cash. That, however, was what, characteristically, *would* happen to him. It would naturally be his kind of traffic' (*A* p.263).

The purpose of this dissertation has been to explore James's interest in different kinds of traffic, and to examine his treatment of transport itself as a fundamentally relational and expository idea. The question of how travel is representational, raised throughout these chapters, maintains an interest in communication: whether the visibility and testimony of ships and passengers at sea, the interrogation of cab drivers and their adulterous passengers, the networking of railway passengers, exposure of cycling journalists, or titillating unveilings of the motorcar romance. The car threads together the relational ideas present throughout the thesis: James's preoccupation with the 'possible development of "closer communities and finer intimacies" between America and Great Britain', with transport as a 'service' fundamentally linked to restoration and supply (here the reconfiguring, from the battlefield, of 'shattered fragments of humanity'), and with the negotiation of the author himself as a public figure (a Chairman, propagandist, and ambassador).⁵ As discussed, the car also mediates between past and present, for while James indubitably associates this vehicle with the exhilarations (and exhaustions) of modernity—'a great transformer of life and of the future!'—its value is also, strangely, in its recovery and alteration of the past, casting a 'firm straight bridge' over the 'dreadful gaps in our yearning, dreadful lapses in our knowledge, dreadful failures in our energy' (*IH* p.360).⁶

For the author, the motorcar thus aligns itself with contrary forces: recuperation and rescue, as well as invasion, destruction and waste. 'The roaring, rushing world seems to me myself—with its brutal and vulgar racket—all the while a less and less enticing place for moving about in', James had confessed to George Abbott James in December 1908.

Most of my friends and relatives are dead [...] in spite of which my daily prospect, these many months past, has bristled almost overwhelmingly with People, and to

⁵ 'The American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France', p.69.

⁶ To William James, 2 July 1905, *LHJ*, II, pp.34-35, p.35.

People more or less on the spot, or just off it, in motors (and preparing to be more than ever on it again) or, most of all, hailing me up to town for feverish and expensive dashes ...⁷

‘People’ are an alien and fleeting group in this complaint, a race apart from ‘friends and relatives’ whose unsolicited intrusion is, for the middle-aged author, a particular threat made possible by the motorcar.⁸ ‘[A]ppalling is the immense incitement to that sort of invasion or expectation that the universal motor-use (hereabouts) compels one to reckon with’, James exclaims wearily to W. E. Norris in December 1908, and in January 1909 grumbles to E. L. Childe of ‘disconcerting years and discouraging sensations [...] earthquakes and newspapers and motor-cars and aeroplanes. I myself, frankly, have lost the desire to live in a situation (by which I mean in a world) in which I can be invaded from so many sides at once.’⁹

The prospect of invasion would be realised on a much greater scale a mere five years later. James’s support of the war effort in Britain and interest in engaging American aid, demonstrated by his association with the Corps, prompted his momentous decision to become a British citizen in 1915. It also had to do with a desire to establish his own identity and relation to his adoptive country. As he wrote to his nephew, explaining his decision: ‘I can only go down to Lamb House now on the footing of an Alien under Police supervision—an alien friend of course, which is a very different thing from an alien enemy, but still a definite technical outsider to the whole situation here, in which my affections and my loyalty are so intensely engaged.’¹⁰ James’s alien yet friendly status, like that of the chauffeur himself, is

⁷ To George Abbot James, 21 December 1908, *LHJ*, pp.116-17, p.117.

⁸ ‘Before the automobile,’ reports Stephen Kern, ‘anyone living more than 8 or 10 miles away was “beyond calling distance”’ (Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1800-1918*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p.217). HJ notes this fact in a letter to Mrs W. D. Howells, 24 February 1907: ‘I am afraid I scarce see, often, any of the country neighbours you—so floridly—impute to me [...] people hereabouts who live at 10 x 15 miles distance from each other across country, and not on the railway, never meet unless they have motors. On the other hand when they have motors (that is the sentiment here) nobody wants to meet them’ (*HJL*, IV, pp 439-40, p.440).

⁹ To W.E. Norris, 23 December 1908, *LHJ*, pp.118-20, p.118, p.119; to Edward Lee Childe, 8 January 1909, *LHJ*, pp.124-26, p.125.

¹⁰ To HJ III, 24 June 1915, *HJL*, IV, pp.759-60, p.760.

both affirmed and mitigated by his role in Norton's campaign, pointing to the mediation of the car in questions as fundamental as identity. 'Still another form of high usefulness comes to our corps [...] in its opportunities for tracing the whereabouts and recovering the identity of the dead, the English dead, named in those grim lists'.¹¹ The war represented exceptional circumstances, of course, yet James's interest in transport as 'a positively productive and creative virtue', an exercise 'in which not one of the forces of social energy and devotion, not one of the true social qualities, sympathy, ingenuity, tact, and taste, fail to come into play', and in which, indeed, 'there is a peculiar honour', should not be overlooked.¹² If Henry James is not often remembered for being the Chairman of a Motor-Ambulance Corps, he ought more, I think, to be considered as an author interested in the way people 'are moved', and why

¹¹'The American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France', p.67.

¹² 'The American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France', p.77.

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